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# The Social Costs of Industrial Growth in the Sub-Arctic Regions of "Canada"

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Graduate Program in Sociology  
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts  
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THE SOCIAL COSTS OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN THE SUB-  
ARCTIC REGIONS OF “CANADA”: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION AND THE  
INNU NATION

by  
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Department of Sociology in conjunction with the Centre for  
Transitional Justice and Post Conflict Reconstruction

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
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## Abstract

Colonialism in the land that is now called “Canada” is rooted in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people’s way of existing and interacting with the world. The present study identifies that the social costs of industrial growth are part of an ongoing process of colonialism which continues to annex Indigenous lands to feed the capitalist economy and reify the power of the state. Through a comparative analysis of literature written about the Attawapiskat First Nation and the Innu Nation, the study reveals that the financial rewards of industrial growth are few, while the cultural, human, and environmental costs are many. The study adds to the growing body of work which seeks to present alternative narratives to those which are presented by state and corporate actors.

## Keywords

Decolonization, Indigeneity, Capitalism, Industrial growth, Corporate Social Responsibility, Impact Benefit Agreements, Identity, Power, Social Control, Heteropatriarchy

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I would like to extend a warm thank you to Jackie Hookimaw-Witt and Norbert Witt, without their past work, this project would not have been possible. Their work is unbelievably important to scholarly literature which is so lacking the voices of elders who possess a world of wisdom and cut-throat humour. Reading their work remains a pleasure, even after spending so many hours with it. I am also thankful for the work of Colin Samson.

The support and laughter of my family is truly what propelled this project. I hope that I remember to I thank them every day for this gift. For any days that I miss, let this written piece be a record: Thank you mom, I miss you. Thank you to Dad and Taunia who show unending love and compassion from whom I learn constantly. To Peter, thank you for your love. Thank you Paige for your wisdom and support. Thank you Bryce for your rebelliousness, which is always a reminder to dive further into risk. To Bree and Conor, you guys fuel me. And to Evangeline, thank you for your inquisitiveness and leaving hearts on my desk to remind me that you are here. Thank you to my Grandma who is my inspiration and teacher in how to be a good person.

This project would not have been possible without the unending love and support of Sandy Gribbin. Sandy is the first person to hear the ideas in this thesis and also the person who helped me work out the kinks. Thank you for showing me the humour in everything.

Dedicated to my mom, Vicki Lynn Schimmer

May 23 1960-December 14-2013

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## Preface

I possess White privilege. I know this because people say racist things in front of me all of the time. People assume that because I have light skin, eyes, and hair that I am ‘White’ and that it is alright to say violent things about people with darker skin—they assume that I am a part of their clan.

I work in a restaurant as a server. Customers ask me all of the time about my “background”, often guessing that I am “Swedish” or “German” based on stereotypes of people with blonde hair and blue eyes. People are almost always surprised when I tell them that due to a number of factors which include family drama and adoption, the only ‘ethnicity’ that I am aware of possessing is Mi’kmaq from the place now known as “Nova Scotia”.

Many of my cousins are in the justice system, moving in and out of prison on a regular basis. Suicide and substance abuse are common in my family. My cousins are not fair skinned like me, but rather they possess racialized phenotypical characteristics such as darker skin, hair, and eyes. Through the racialization of my cousins, I am also reminded of my White privilege.

My step-mom is a Black woman from Jamaica, and I have been exposed to and influenced by Jamaican food, language, and other aspects of Jamaican culture. I am also reminded of my White privilege every time my step-mom (who goes by “Lil’ Mama”) tells me a story about feeling a sense of shame and embarrassment when somebody who is Black is convicted of a crime.

I grew up in settler culture, in a city called “London, Ontario” on traditional Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe territory. Our family struggled a lot. When I was small, my dad worked at Westinghouse factory (later called ABB), painting sheets of metal. In the early 1990s, the factory closed and my dad lost his job. My dad did not have a high school diploma and was terrified about the prospects of finding work. My parents broke up not long after my dad lost

his job, money was a significant factor in the breakdown of their marriage. He reacted through substance abuse and contemplated suicide.

When I was working on my undergraduate degree at King's University College at UWO, I took a class called "the Sociology of the Environment", taught by Kathryn Kopinak. In this class I learned that Westinghouse had dumped tonnes of PCBs into the creek which ran through our backyard. This was a profound learning experience for me as my family was unaware of the issue. What struck me most was that while my father was being exposed to toxic chemicals at work, the company was also poisoning the bodies of his family. My father was exchanging his labour, time, and the health of his family for the money needed for daily survival.

In 2012 my mom was downsized from her job in the paper industry, a position that she had held for nearly twenty years. My mom was terrified of looking for a job as she was also considered "under-educated". My mom reacted by drinking, and by the end of 2013 she died from liver failure. I consider my mom's death a type of suicide.

Throughout the course of this project, I often struggled with trying to figure out where I am positioned within the research. Who am I to comment on matters such as race, gender, and class? I have come to realize that my curiosity about the issues discussed in the present thesis are just as much about conducting research for social justice, as it is about a personal exploration of history and identity. It has been suggested to me by my advisor, Dr. Anton Allahar, that I have been orphaned by history. This project is an attempt to address the tension that I feel in regards to my identity and family history, through seeking to elucidate how systems of oppression intersect.

## Chapter 1

### 1 Introduction

Colonialism in the land that is now called “Canada” is rooted in the dispossession of Indigenous people’s way of existing and interacting with the world. Today, the ancestral traditions, spirituality, and practices which make up various Indigenous identities are dissected into legal terms such as “rights”, “title”, and capacity to “self-govern”.

Regardless of the lens through which Indigenous dispossession is framed, the outcome is the same. When Europeans began colonizing North America, their goal was to deprive Indigenous people of their way of being and offer in exchange a choice: death or capitalism.

It is widely accepted in the scholarly literature written about Indigenous peoples in the land that is now called “Canada” that the historical goal of the Crown and federal government was to “assimilate” the Indigenous population. However, “assimilation” in this context is rarely defined in critical terms. In the present thesis, I argue that Indigenous “assimilation” in Canada specifically refers to embodying the practices of liberalism, individualism, and hetero-patriarchy. Further, I argue that absorption into the market economy remains the contemporary and ultimate goal of the federal government.

Through a comparative analysis of Attawapiskat First Nation, and the Innu Nation, I intend to demonstrate how the colonizer’s goal continues to be the annexation of Indigenous land for capitalist exploitation. However, the strategies employed by the colonizer have, over time, become more subtle. Whereas in the past, industrial growth has occurred largely without Indigenous consultation or consent, now complicated government and corporate “consultation” processes seek to create the illusion of consent and social responsibility through legal bureaucracy. The most recent incarnation of this process is the use of Impact and Benefit Agreements.

## 1.1 Background of the problem

In exchange for access to Indigenous land and the resources therein, corporations and government offer a menu of financial promises which, it is implied, will improve the lives of local communities. However, the trauma experienced in these colonially created villages cannot be solved with cash. Instead, social pathology as expressed through alcoholism, sexual abuse, family violence, solvent-sniffing, and suicide are likely to be made worse through further dispossession and social disruption. Once resource extraction has begun, communities must cope with new social, physical, and personal difficulties as inequalities are exacerbated, ancestral lands are poisoned and destroyed, and cultural continuity as embedded in the land is severed. Thus, the ultimate social cost of industrial growth is the infiltration, solidification, and repercussions of capitalism.

Cycles of abuse which stem from the Crown and Federal government have set into motion widespread trauma experienced at both the personal and the community levels. After invasion by the colonizer, Indigenous people—like the Ojibwegowuk and the Innu—were made purposefully dependent on the bourgeois authorities of Church, private enterprise (the HBC), and the government so as to better control the population. Once controlled, the people were corralled into “communities” and coercively made to mirror heteropatriarchal social organization through imposed structures of “governance”. The people were purposefully severed from traditional lands, governance structures, diets, spirituality, and language so as to be efficiently absorbed into the market economy as wage labourers—this remains the government’s contemporary goal.

Social theory can be helpful in explaining the socio-psychological difficulties that are experienced as a result of ongoing colonialism in Attawapiskat and the Innu Nation. I draw from Marx’s work on social class to explain how the bourgeois authorities of government, Church, and the HBC coerced communities into a system of dependence on the capitalist economy, through involvement in the fur trade. Dependence on wage labour through trading pelts for survival tools created a system which controlled the population by drawing them to trading posts. Once at the trading posts, Christianity was used to pacify the people while simultaneously teaching the social organization needed to fuel the capitalist economy. Eventually, this led to settlement in the 1960s.

When the nomadic Omushkegowuk and Innu were coercively settled, almost every facet of traditional social organization was disrupted. The Omushkegowuk and the Innu have very intimate connections with the land and ecology inherent to it, and as such, their social organization is scattered across traditional territory. Being severed from the land is being severed from traditional values, belief systems, and morals.

Tragically, suicide rates have become endemic within these colonially created communities. The work of Durkheim (1897/2002) is helpful in explaining why this is the case. Durkheim posited that when societies experience sudden and severe social breakdown, suicides are likely to increase. Without social institutions operating to constrain the morals, values, and beliefs of the people, individuals are left feeling lost and lonely. According to Durkheim, the moral confusion experienced by people results in “anomic suicide”.

The Omushkegowuk and the Innu were coercively sedentarized only decades ago. In one generation, the way of life which has guided them for thousands of years was violently and abruptly changed. Social order, family relations, and traditional economy were very suddenly disrupted as people were cut-off from the nomadic lifestyle. Cultural shaming used by the Church and school system only served to make these problems worse. As a result, many people in these communities express confusion, they do not know how to act or what to believe in. This is especially true of the youth. The people are caught between two opposing social worlds; that of the colonizer and that of their lived memories of traditional organization. Neither seems to fit village life in a meaningful way. This is what Colin Samson refers to as “a way of life that does not exist” (2003a). The social disruption experienced by the Innu and the Omushkegowuk exemplifies “anomic suicide” as described by Durkheim.

However, “anomic suicide” does not completely capture the complexity of self-destructive behaviour in these communities. Beyond severing people from the land, the colonizer imposed rigid laws and strict regulations through the *Indian Act*, the Church, and the school. When regulations were not followed, the people were punished economically, psychologically, physically, socially, and sexually. The violence of



oppressive forces impose strict regulations which offer people little room for autonomy. For the Omushkegowuk and the Innu (as well as other Indigenous people in “Canada”), aggressive assimilationist policies continue to filter into the daily lives and social organization of the people and this results in a sensation of being trapped, or doomed by fate. This is what Durkheim describes as “fatalistic” suicide. Durkheim argued that when people are overly regulated (as in the case of slavery, for example) they feel condemned to fate as society offers little hope for escape. Thus, people succumb to suicide as they see no other way out.

Although “anomic” and “fatalistic” suicide appear to represent opposing ideas (one exists when there is no social order, the other when there is too much), they are not mutually exclusive (Kirmayer et al. 2007:56). Rather, both motivations for suicide operate in the minds of people who choose to end their own life so as to expel the violence of colonialism from their lived experience.

Another way that people seek to cleanse the violence of colonialism is through slower suicide such as alcoholism, solvent abuse, and interpersonal violence. Fanon (1952/2008; 1963/2004) taught that the indignities that colonized people face under the oppression of colonialism manifests in feelings of interiority and low self-worth. This sense of lowliness works in the favour of the colonizer as the Indigenous mind remains in a state of weakness. Rather than expressing anger at the state, the colonized person internalizes her anger and it manifests as self-harm and interpersonal violence. When the colonized person engages in self-destructive behavior as such, she confirms the colonizer’s gaze which sees her as a savage, racialized, dehumanized being. In this moment, the colonial subject is successfully Othered.

In order to rid the mind of feelings of inferiority, the colonized person—who has been made to feel shameful for her identity—seeks to become more like the colonizer. The violence of colonialism persists over time because colonized subjects simply re-create the social and economic abuses put in place by the colonizer. In this way, Fanon believed that any pursuit to “decolonization” must be revolutionary and not reformist. Fanon

suggests that since colonialism is violent, it can only be quashed with equally violent forces. Thus, Fanon argued that violence can be a cleansing force.

Indigenous people have been resisting colonial violence since invasion and subsequent occupation of their lands. Many of the resisters of the past have tried to work within the legal framework of Canadian “Aboriginal law” in order to slow the progress of colonialism. However, these efforts simply encourage the colonizer to evolve their strategies. In the meantime, the systems of oppression continue.

Recently, a number of Indigenous studies scholars have taken up Fanon’s work and have used it to try and imagine a decolonization of the mind. I am thinking here particularly of the work of Taiaiake Alfred (2009), Glen Sean Coulthard (2014), Jeff Corntassel (2012), Waziyatawin 2012; and Erin Freeland-Ballantyne (2014). These scholars challenge the violence of colonial capitalism through discussions and actions which not only criticize the system, but seek to imagine a new one. Rather than fighting physically with guns, these scholars seek to fight colonial capitalism through physical and ideological resistance to it. I am particularly inspired by Freeland-Ballantyne and her work with the Dechinta University which operates 150km away from any road in the back country of Dene territory, commonly referred to as the “Northwest Territories”. This university combines place-based politics, with decolonization theory, and teachings from elders. The work of Dechinta decolonizes the mind, while also teaching the body how to decolonize by learning to interact with the land in reciprocal fashion. Dechinta seeks to accomplish all this while challenging commonly held pedagogical and ideological assumptions within the academe. On the one hand, the work of Dechinta may be interpreted by some as particularly *non-violent*, however, the revolutionary element of the school presents a direct challenge to the hegemonic structures which continue to colonize.

In light of social theory which I use to explain colonialism, it is antithetical to argue that large-scale industrial growth will make life better or easier for the Omushkegowuk or the Innu. As part of the ongoing force of colonialism, Industrial growth projects seek to enhance government and corporate economic growth, while further dispossessing

Indigenous people of their traditions and beliefs as embedded in the land. The ultimate goal is to further entrench the ideology of liberalism and individualism so as to guarantee access to land and bodies for capitalist exploitation.

## 1.2 Chapter outlines

Chapter 2 of this thesis explores the concept of intergenerational trauma as an outcome of colonialism more broadly. Drawing on the writings of colonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon and contemporary scholars in the Indigenous studies, I attempt to map the intentional destruction of Indigenous cultures from invasion until present. I argue that in order for the government to entrench capitalism as the *modus operandi* of Indigenous life, cultural dependence on ancestral lands must be destroyed and replaced by dependence on the market economy. In doing so, I explore issues of social and environmental injustice which shape the minds and bodies of Northern Indigenous communities, who not only face colonial trauma but also must cope with the modern challenges of industrialization, climate change, and food insecurity.

As government increasingly devolves the burden of service delivery to communities, industrial growth is presented by government and corporate actors as the best solution to obtaining access to basic food, shelter, and clean water. In the same way that Indigenous people were coerced into settlement on reserves, a threat to survival is used again by the government to further the momentum of large-scale industrial growth. Colonial dispossession is concealed, and instead, resource extraction is presented as an opportunity for “prosperity”:

The Harper Government will continue to consult with the territorial governments and representatives of First Nations on further improvements to the regulatory regimes in the north that will encourage investment while ensuring resources are developed sustainably so that Northerners can achieve the prosperity they seek (Government of Canada 2012)

Neoliberal policies favoured under globalization prescribe less government intervention in the daily lives of citizens through the encouragement of free market capitalism. Social services are being increasingly privatized and a general philosophical shift places responsibility for economic development and social well-being onto individuals and

communities, rather than onto the government. Meanwhile, copious amounts of natural resources have been discovered in Canada's Northern regions, and nouveau technology has made their extraction a profitable endeavor. Unlike other parts of Canada, Northern regions are occupied by a majority of Indigenous peoples. It is under these social, political, and economic shifts that Indigenous communities are being encouraged to "agree" to industrial growth on their ancestral lands. The general premise is that resource extraction will bring employment and royalties to communities which will trickle down and improve the daily lives of Indigenous "citizens".

As part of the colonial state's strategy to "reconcile", the government pays lip-service to Indigenous "sovereignty" by placing the burden of responsibility for the negotiation of these projects onto small, rural communities. Large-scale resource extraction, is then arbitrated between local community leaders and transnational corporations through contracts called Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs). While normative government and scholarly reports suggest that IBAs provide an opportunity for communities to negotiate "fair" terms that should lead to improvements in the daily lives of local people, little follow-up research has been conducted to see if this is actually the case.

Chapter 3 of this thesis attempts to dissect the power differential between rural Northern Indigenous communities, transnational corporations, and the Canadian government. By combining critical research on "Aboriginal law", Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs), and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) doctrine, I argue that power is not distributed evenly between negotiators. The result is agreements that do not reflect the beliefs, values, or desires of the majority of community members. Instead, large-scale resource extraction projects create new, and exacerbate existing environmental and social injustice.

By the time IBAs are in the negotiation stage, corporations have already invested huge sums of money in exploration as well as in planning phases of the project. From the government and corporate perspective, IBAs provide an opportunity for legal certainty to assure that industrial growth moves forward unimpeded. From the community perspective, "development" has already begun through exploration and the building of

infrastructure to support the impending project. Thus, communities often feel as though ratifying an IBA is their only chance to influence huge projects which they perceive will happen with or without their consent.

While some elite members of communities such as chiefs, band council leaders, and business owners stand to benefit economically from resource extraction and are thus more likely to agree, other community members are scarcely consulted in a meaningful way.

In order to pacify local concerns over environmental destruction, IBAs often rely on the language of “sustainability”. However, “sustainability” has different and opposing meaning for corporations and communities. For corporations, “sustainability” generally refers to sustaining profits and greenwashing, whereas for communities the word has come to represent ecological consciousness and protection. The outcome is that communities often feel as though they were “tricked” into signing agreements over which they have little to no control once they are signed. Chapter 3 points out an eerie parallel between the numbered treaties of the late nineteenth century, and the contemporary use of IBAs.

This thesis analyzes the social costs of industrial growth through a comparative analysis of two Indigenous political bodies who have negotiated Impact Benefit Agreements with transnational corporations for large-scale mining projects on their ancestral lands.

Chapter 4 will present the Omushkegowuk, or Swampy Cree of Attawapiskat and their relationship with the Victor Diamond Mine which is owned and operated by De Beers Group of Companies. Chapter 5 analyzes the Innu Nation of the land known commonly as “Labrador” and their relationship with Vale who own and operate the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Mine. The Innu Nation consists of two colonially created communities; the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and the Mushuau Innu First Nation, the latter of the two live in Natuashish (and were formerly settled in Davis Inlet). There are many superficial similarities between Attawapiskat and the Innu Nation which make them curious targets for analysis, both presently and in the past. The tragic reality is that material poverty and intergenerational trauma are so prevalent in both groups that many researchers over the

years have spent time gathering data and analyzing the lived experiences of the Omushkegowuk, the Mushuau Innu, and the Innu of Sheshatshiu, leaving stacks of articles and books in their wake. I draw from this scholarly literature, and news sources, as well as websites, blogs, books, and various art forms, some created by local community members, in an attempt to generate holistic accounts of life on these Northern reserves where transnational mining giants also operate.

The study of globalization often points out that dominant economies are generally located in the global North, while peripheral economies are located in the global South. However, the momentum of “development” is evolving so rapidly this is no longer a rule-of-thumb. In this thesis, both transnational corporations are located in the global South; De Beers Group of Companies is based in South Africa, and Vale’s headquarters are located in Brazil. Further, with copious amounts of resources now exploitable in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, peripheral economies and the exploitation that so often accompanies them are surfacing in the high-North. This very scenario is an indication of how quickly the force of globalization is changing the organization of the world, and why it is so important to study the repercussions of these shifts.

In normative scholarly research on Impact and Benefit Agreements, the IBAs for Attawapiskat and the Innu Nation are referred to as “successful” or otherwise written about in a hopeful manner (see O’Faircheallaigh 2013:1797; Fidler and Hitch 2007:60; Gibson 200). However, I problematize this by asking “success for whom?” and “hope for whom?” As is happening all over the Canadian sub-Arctic and Arctic regions, rural and impoverished Northern people are being exposed to schemes meant to foster economic growth at the state and corporate level, while being told that these projects will improve “economic development” locally. State-led departments, policies, and reports continually use the term “development” to indicate an underlying assumption that Indigenous people are “underdeveloped” and thus ought to become “developed”. In the past, the language used was “civilized” but the project remains the same. This is perhaps best exemplified by the most recent incarnation of “Indian Affairs” known now as “Aboriginal Affairs and Northern *Development* Canada” (AANDC, my emphasis), the department responsible for

disseminating almost all policy regarding Indigenous peoples in the country. The self-proclaimed mandate of the AANDC is to:

[S]upport Aboriginal people (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and Northerners in their efforts to:

- improve social well-being and economic prosperity;
- develop healthier, more sustainable communities; and
- Participate more fully in Canada's political, social and economic development - to the benefit of all Canadians (2015a)

Similarly, both De Beers and Vale have policy statements about “sustainability” and “community” which suggest that their presence will result in a positive impact for local people who live near the project:

“De Beers Canada believes that projects must benefit and add to the sustainability of local communities. Socio-economic development will be a primary focus through community participation in employment and business opportunities in all stages of the mineral development process from exploration, evaluation, mine development, production and closure.” (De Beers 2014:1)

Mirroring the previous statement, Vale’s approach to social responsibility states that:

“Vale is committed to leaving a positive legacy for the communities close to its operations and projects, through the consolidation of trust, mutual respect and the promotion of an open dialogue.” (Vale 2013:47)

Chapter 6 provides a comparative discussion of the Omushkegowuk and the Innu. I seek to provide a counter narrative to dominant versions of history which posit the colonial invaders as generous, and the Indigenous peoples as grateful for their generosity. The lived experience of the Omushkegowuk and the Innu reveal deep-seeded state-led abuse which continues to extinguish traditional minds and bodies. Large-scale industrial growth is but an extension of this process. As such, I seek to problematize normative assumptions of what “success” means in regards to economic development in the North. Indeed, local lives have changed since the mines were introduced in Northern Ontario

and Labrador, however, both groups remain materially poor and problems of colonial trauma remain central in the daily lives of people who live in Attawapiskat, Natuashish, and Sheshatshiu. The comparative analysis complicates Eurocentric concepts of “development” by making it obvious that participation in the market economy through cooperation with a transnational corporation does not solve deeply rooted personal and community level problems. Colonial trauma continues to plague the minds and bodies of the people in question, and industrial growth only deepens these wounds.

Is industrial growth near Indigenous communities in Canada’s north good or bad for the people who live there? I argue that this is not the right question to ask, for in reality, the answer is both. However, the costs and benefits are not equally distributed among populations. While a few elite members of communities may benefit through increased employment and income opportunities, the social costs of industrial growth are disproportionately absorbed by communities whose majority do not prosper at the same rate or in the same way. As the ideology of individualism and liberalization spreads through Northern Canada, the bodies and lands of those people are being poisoned by projects whose ultimate benefactors are transnational corporations, the state of Canada, the province, and a small Indigenous elite. As such, industrial growth is likely to increase social stratification, intensify local conflicts, and perhaps most importantly, further disrupt cultural practices that are so closely related to mental and social health, and which present opportunity for decolonizing praxis. These repercussions have serious implications for social and environmental justice in Canada, as any industrial growth project brings with it a great degree of ecological risk that affects people. From the destruction of land to build a mine, the tailing ponds necessary to hold toxins, to the risk of toxic spill, the ecosystems affected by large-scale resource extraction are greatly compromised. The result is twofold: on the one hand it remains that some of Canada’s most materially poor communities absorb a disproportionate amount of hazardous waste as a result of resources being extracted for foreign consumption. On the other hand, the cultural and spiritual belief systems of entire populations are being destroyed for the profit of few, at the expense of many.



Health problems such as substance abuse, high suicide rates, and violence cannot be solved solely through monetary gain, as it does not get to the root of the colonial problem. As discussed above, Canada's colonial legacy has not only dispossessed Indigenous people of their land but has created barriers to cultural continuity. Cultural continuity is thought to be one of the most important interventions to suicide, substance abuse, and violence (Chandler and Lalonde 1998; 2010). Seen through this lens, it is antithetical to assume that further dispossession of land and the resources therein will help to alleviate the trauma associated with being a colonized people.

Despite the omnipresence of colonialism in the lives of Indigenous communities in the rural North, there remains hope for a brighter future. The communities in question are undeniably resilient and do not yield passively to the momentum of resource development in the North. Despite social and legal barriers, both communities continue to express resistance to corporate and government domination on their ancestral territories. Community members are participating in protests, blockades, and other forms of demonstration to voice their opposition to further colonial penetration. Sometimes these protests are directed at the corporations, sometimes at the state, and at other times they are movements directed at community-level elite corruption. Like people, cultures are not stagnant, they evolve and grow through a reflexive process of looking back to move forward. People of all ages in Attawapiskat, Natuashish, and Sheshatshiu are channeling their collective anger at colonial power and corruption in productive ways that draw from ancestral knowledge in the hopes of changing the future.

Emerging from the scholarly work of decolonial thought, self-identified "settlers" have emerged with ideas about what it means to "decolonize the settler mind". I finish this thesis with a discussion of decolonization as presented by these and other contemporary Indigenous Studies Scholars who embody the reflexivity needed to go back and forth at the same time.

## 1.3 Definitions of terms (alphabetical)

### 1.3.1 First Nation

Where I use the term “First Nation”, it is in reference to specific political bodies which are recognized by the state. In general, the state defines “First Nations” as “status” and “non-status” Indians, and this can be in relation to people or to a political body. I have refrained from using First Nation in my work, unless speaking specifically about a political body.

### 1.3.2 “Indian”

Occasionally I use the term “Indian,” and I have put it in quotation marks. “Indian” is a word that continues to be used by the federal government to homogenize and successfully Other Indigenous peoples. Where I use the term, I do so to highlight this abuse.

### 1.3.3 Indigenous

I use the term “Indigenous” to refer to any person or group of people who identify as “indigenous” to colonized places. This means that the person (or people) know of, or believe to have ancestors who occupied land before colonizing invaders “claimed” it. In Canada, the current trend for government is to use the term “Aboriginal” to represent such a group. I refrain from using the term “Aboriginal” wherever possible because of contemporary Indigenous studies scholars, such as Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel who posit that:

Far from reflecting any true history or honest reconciliation with the past or present in the Canadian context, ‘aboriginalism’ is a legal, political and cultural discourse designed to serve an agenda of silent surrender to an inherently unjust relation at the root of the colonial state itself (2005:598)

### 1.3.4 Ecology

I use the term “ecology” to refer to the interconnected relationships that all organisms, including humans, have with each other. For some people, like the Omushkegowuk and the Innu, the “social world” is not only made up of humans, but includes plants, rocks, streams, forests, the sun, the moon, the stars, and so on. These relationships are

interconnected and reciprocal. This means that “the environment” or “nature” is not a thing which is separate from the human experience, but is a part of it.

Ecology is inherently social.

So, when I am referring to “ecological destruction” I am simultaneously discussing the destruction of plants, rocks, streams, air, and other elements which are commonly referred to as “the environment”, while also talking about repercussions for humans. Human repercussions may be experienced biologically, emotionally, socially, psychologically, spiritually—or through a combination of these. I use “ecology” to refer to such interconnectedness (see Morton 2010 for a deeper understanding of ecological philosophy).

### 1.3.5 Economic development

“Economic Development” will refer to the process of improving the material welfare of the majority of individuals in a specified area. Material welfare must improve “consistently or substantially over long periods of time. The time dimension is important so as to distinguish between development and short-period booms in the level of economic activity” (Beckford 1975:78, quoted in Allahar 1995:56). Economic development may be expressed through improvements in education, infrastructure, housing, and access to clean water and healthy food. Economic development then is distinguished from economic *growth* in that growth refers to an increase in a country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and as such is not a reflection of the material welfare of the majority. Allahar points out that “[e]conomic *growth* speaks to a situation in which per capita income is rising. It is to be distinguished from development in that a rise in per capita income may occur simultaneously with the increasing material impoverishment of significantly large groups of people in a given [area]” (1995:56).

### 1.3.6 Environmental justice

In my education as a sociologist, “environmental justice” generally refers to the belief that people of lower socio-economic status should not be disproportionately exposed to hazardous waste due to environmental destruction (see Agyeman, Cole, Haluza-DeLay,

O'Riley 2009). However, for the purposes of this thesis I turn to a more rich and holistic definition, by Anishnaabe scholar Deborah McGregor:

[...] I have come to understand that relationships based on environmental justice are not limited to relations between people but consist of those among all beings of Creation. From the perspective of the world view within which I am embedded, environmental justice is most certainly about power relationships among people and between people and various institutions of colonization. It concerns issues of cultural dominance, of environmental destruction, and of inequity in terms of how certain groups of people are impacted differently by environmental destruction from others, sometimes by design. It is about justice for all beings of Creation, not only because threats to their existence threaten ours but because from an Aboriginal perspective justice among beings of Creation is life-affirming [...] Environmental justice in this context is much broader than “impacts” on people. There are responsibilities beyond those of people that also must be fulfilled to ensure the process of creation will continue (2009:27-28).

### 1.3.7 Social costs

In this thesis, I refer to “social costs” as being predictable social outcomes of industrial growth near Indigenous communities in Canada’s political economy. As stated by Kopinak (2010), social costs are often associated with private enterprise due to “individual firms’ narrow accounting methods that calculate only the costs and profits of their own companies” (15). Social costs are not absorbed by the private company, but rather become the responsibility of local individuals and communities.

## Chapter 2

### 2 Colonialism, globalization, and “Aboriginal development”

*For a monarch, dictator, or democrat, the dilemma of ruling is this: if rule is accommodating, then the ruled become indolent and ungrateful; if the ruler is harsh, then the ruled become uncooperative and rebellious. In such a paradigm the only way to maintain power is to keep subjects off balance and marginalized through seduction and force (Lovelace 2009:ix)*

Colonialism has always been rooted in the quest for power, social control, and economic prosperity. In the land that is now called “Canada”, the greatest asset to colonization was access to land which could be invaded, occupied, and then exploited. As in other “settler” colonies, the Indigenous population in Canada posed a significant threat to the acquisition of land needed for settlement and exploitation. Many strategies were employed to solve the issue of the “inconvenient Indian” (King 2013), some of these included the purposeful spread of disease (Fernandez and Herzog 2014), and strategic starvation through the destruction of traditional food systems (Daschuk 2013; Mosby 2013). In regards to the Indigenous population who survived, the federal government began to impose treaties which included the creation of the reserve system. Treaties were used to control the threat of Indigenous resistance through isolation “in such a way that they would be extinguished or forever be subservient and dependent” (Frideres 2011:11). Through the reserve system, land could be freed for settler expansion, and Indigenous people would be segregated where they would learn to assimilate through religion and government imposed “education”.

#### 2.1 The colonial function of religion and education

Religion plays an important part in controlling the minds and bodies of Indigenous people in colonized “Canada”. The presence of male missionaries spreading the “word of Jesus” provided the framework for the installation of heteropatriarchy during the earliest phases of colonialism. As Cherokee intellectual Andrea Smith argues, “in order to colonize peoples whose societies are not based on social hierarchy, colonizers must first

naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. In turn, patriarchy rests on a gender binary system in which only two genders exist, one dominating the other.” (2006:72). Thus, heteropatriarchy is rooted in the dominance of men over women and people of other genders. This structure is mirrored by the heterosexual family, thus, “[j]ust as patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens. Any liberation struggle that does not challenge heteronormativity cannot substantially challenge colonialism or white supremacy” (Ibid).

When missionaries contacted Indigenous people, they presented a gendered religious ideology which is constructed of a male god and his son who are omnipresent and powerful. Priests were all men and people were taught to herald the priest as a central leader who must be obeyed and who controls the fate of people in “the next world”. Through the structures created by the Church, Christianity teaches how to organize society into a system that is based on the dominance of White, heterosexual men.

Before occupation began in “Canada”, Indigenous communities had various forms of political structures which ranged from highly structured societies organized around hierarchy, to less structured and organized groups which were based on small egalitarian cohesion (Frideres 2011:6). However, when colonizers arrived they corralled Indigenous people into constructed groups and then imposed a governance structure based on the heteropatriarchal structure of the Eurocentric family. These new forms of social structure removed women and people of various gender identities from the political atmosphere, and replaced them with men (Ibid:7). Colonially created positions of power as represented by a singular “chief” and “band council” continue to be the basic structure of many Indigenous groups under the Indian Act. This is a system of governance was successful through offering rewards to those who accepted their new role as “leader” (Ibid).

In the late nineteenth century the federal government, in alliance with the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and later the United churches began a nationwide system of residential schools for Indigenous children in Canada (Ibid: 80). The strategy to “civilize” through forced indoctrination is rooted in the belief that bourgeois liberal,

Christian values would be internalized and that Indigenous people would subsequently become politically controlled consumers. This is not limited to the Canadian context but rather is connected to colonialism and imperialism more broadly. The use of education for cultural imperialism is well understood by Martin Carnoy (1974:3) who argued that:

[...] far from acting as a liberator, Western formal education came to most countries as part of imperialist domination. It was consistent with the goals of imperialism: the economic and political control of the people in one country by the dominant class in another. The imperial powers attempted through schooling, to train the colonized for roles that suited the colonizer. Even within the dominant countries themselves, schooling did not offset social inequities. The educational system was no more just or equal than the economy and society itself—specifically, we argue, because schooling was organized to develop and maintain in the imperial countries an inherently inequitable and unjust organization of production and political power

The reserve system had effectively segregated the Indigenous population but at a significant financial cost to the federal government. In order to reduce these costs, schooling was used to mould Indigenous bodies and minds in such a way as to assimilate them into the broader consumer culture and make them less of a financial drain (Frideres 2011:59). Mid-way through the twentieth century, education used as cultural imperialism was reinforced by human capital theory which touts education as a tool for economic growth (Schultz 1961). Education was thus used as a device to train Indigenous children in skills, habits, and discipline which would support particular social positions within the market economy (Wotherspoon and Satzewich 1993:116). During the residential school era (which did not end until 1996), “education” was delivered to children in institutions far removed from their families, communities, and traditions so that capitalist ways of knowing could be instilled. In order to achieve assimilation, Indigenous bodies were removed from practices on the land, and Indigenous minds were subject to cultural shaming and abuse. This scheme is highlighted in a speech presented to the Canadian senate in 1887 by the U.S. lobby group *Friends of the Indians*:

We have, to begin with the absolute need of awakening in the savage Indian broader desires and ampler wants. To bring him out of savagery into citizenship, we must make the Indian more intelligently selfish before we can make him unselfishly intelligent. We need to awaken in him wants. In his dull savagery, he must be touched by the wings of the divine angel of discontent. The desire for property of his own may become an intense educating force. The wish for a home

of his own awakens him to new efforts. Discontent with the teepee [sic] and the starving rations of the Indian camp in winter is needed to get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers—and trousers with pockets in them, and with a pocket that aches to be filled with dollars. (Merrill E. Gates, quoted in Freeland Ballantyne 2014:72)

The removal of Indigenous bodies and minds from their ancestral lands has severely disrupted the psychological and social well-being of Indigenous people and has set into motion cycles of trauma passed intergenerationally. Cumulative psychological, emotional, interpersonal, and cultural injury have resulted in disproportionately high rates of suicide, substance abuse, and violence among Canada's Indigenous population (Elias et al. 2012; Bombay, Matheson, and Anison 2009). It is important to recognize here, that not all Indigenous communities in Canada (and elsewhere in the colonized world) experience widespread health problems in the same way, and with the same intensity. Rather, health problems such as those listed above are an outcome of a community's interaction with colonial attempts to quash cultural identity.

The study conducted by Chandler and Lalonde found an empirical argument in the use of cultural continuity as a hedge against suicide (1998; 2010). That some First Nations in British Columbia experience practically no suicide, while others experience suicide which is up to 800 times higher than the national average (Chandler and Lalonde 1998:2), is an indication that all indigenous groups have not experienced colonialism in the same way. Suicide was highest in the communities where cultural continuity was lacking. Conversely, in communities with low suicide rates, cultural continuity proved to be high (1998;2010)

The findings of Chandler and Lalonde are complimented by Durkheim's theories on suicide. Durkheim (1897/2002) teaches that a person's decision to end their own life knowingly, is contingent on their ability to integrate into society. Based on Durkheim's ideas, communities who have managed to maintain pre-invasion social order, would be more likely to possess the morals, values, beliefs, and economic structures which are familiar to the whole. However, when these social institutions are disrupted, suicide is likely to increase. What Durkheim provides is the case for social factors which drive people to commit suicide. Durkheim's 'fatalistic' and 'anomic' suicide-types are helpful



in illuminating the social processes that lead to self-harm. However, I posit that these two types of suicide are not mutually exclusive.

“Fatalistic” suicide presents itself when rigid rules or laws pose too much control over people. When the invaders arrived, they imposed strict laws and rules which continue to govern Indigenous societies today. Not only were groups subject to societal disruption through exposure to the invaders, but they also had imposed on them strict rules from new institutions like the Church and the Indian Act. These rules are oppressive, overregulating, and feel omnipresent and so people feel trapped. Faced with the perception that there is no way out of this ‘no-man’s-land’, self-destruction presents a chance for people to cleanse their minds of the torture that too much order imposes.

[The Innu’s] repeated experiences with the state and its agents are characterized by the insistence that they adapt to foreign institutions and the Euro-Canadian sedentary society. Through the imposition of law, justice, health care, social services, the church, and other institutions, the Innu receive a strong message that in order to survive they will have to start thinking and operating in ways that are often in deep contradiction with Innu morals, values, and practices. If they do not, a host of punishments and reprimands flow—including jail sentences if they do not comply with the law, withdrawal of funds if they do not follow the regulations of Social Services, further sequestration of their land if they do not comply with the various land claims processes, and even the instilling of guilt by the clergy and judges for various acts of noncompliance. This is contradicted by the wishes of most Innu to remain, at least in some degree, Innu. To do so, however, is often very difficult, given the need to conform to the contradictory assumptions both of the law and of the regulations imposed by the institutions that the authorities have established in the villages. Psychologically, the Innu are in a collective no-win situation. (Samson 2009:132)

With too much regulation, the individual feels as though they have no choice, no other option but to continue living in the oppressive society, or cleanse the mind of these fatalistic thoughts through suicide.

“Anomic suicide”, on the other hand, occurs when social disruption is very high, and laws which used to govern the people no longer have their regulatory function. The result is what many communities experience today, which is an almost total disruption of social order. This is especially true for communities like the Omushkegowuk and the Innu who were coercively sedentarized. Once the people were domiciled, their traditions,

values, and beliefs cannot be located within sedentarized life. Anomic suicide is identifiable when traditional governance, religion, economic structures, and gender dynamics have been jostled by colonial invasion, but have not been replaced outright by new structures. The result is that people feel as though they are straddling two worlds. Samson (2009) explains what village life is like for the Innu youth:

The younger generations, however, have had much looser moorings in *nutshimit* [the country] and more intense exposure to the institutions of assimilation. These individuals have often been in the position of being successful in neither the Innu world nor the *Akaneshault* [person of European decent] world, where the local schools have proved woefully inadequate at educating them for the various opportunities in the wider Canadian society. Consequently, the young, feeling they are failures in both worlds, often live out their existences in the villages in a sort of torpor punctuated by drinking, gas sniffing, random and depersonalized sex, and violence. (135)

The Innu are learning to become ashamed of their identity as Innu people, but they do not feel confident in the *Akaneshault* world either. The result is that youths do not know who to be, how to act, or who to emulate. The problem then, is not *just* with the Innu, but rather, the entire social atmosphere that they have grown into. The result, as explained by Elizabeth Penashue is that Innu children “don’t like school, don’t like the community, or *nutshimit* [the country].” (Ibid:133).

“Make people ashamed of their existence, Jean-Paul Sartre said. Yes: make them aware of the possibilities they have denied themselves or the passiveness they have displayed in situations where it was really necessary to cling to the heart of the world, like a splinter...” (Fanon, 1952/2008:59). Frantz Fanon was a Martinique-French psychiatrist and revolutionary who identified psychological inferiority in Black patients that he treated in the 1950s. Fanon believed that colonization imposes on the colonized mind an internalized pressure to conform to the values and beliefs of the ruling class. The need to become more like the colonizer, stems from a deep seeded inferiority complex which is rooted in shame. In order to alleviate shame, the colonized person tries to emulate the behaviours of the colonizer. In turn, the colonized person embodies the values and beliefs of the dominant colonizing culture while vilifying their own. This is what Fanon refers to as people who live with “black skin and white masks”. However, the colonized

person is never accepted as an equal in the dominant colonial structure, and thus she develops deep-seeded psychological distress as a result of the ridicule that she experiences from embodying Otherness; “[t]o be ‘the Other’ is to always feel in an uncomfortable position, to be on one’s guard, to be prepared to be rejected and...unconsciously do everything that’s needed to bring about the anticipated catastrophe” (Ibid:57). Recently, a new generation of Canadian Indigenous scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred (2009) and Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) have used Fanon’s insights to advance and explain colonial theory in Canada.

Taiaiake Alfred (2009) has identified four effects from the imposition of the *Indian Act* and the enforcement of sedentary life on Indigenous people; “Disorientation” (because of the inability to engage in self-determination), “Disempowerment” (due to the coercive and manipulative nature of colonial laws and enforcement which render dependence), “Discord” (due to people’s disconnection from their land and ancestral practices), and finally “Disease” (due to poor nutrition as a result of sedentary life and state dependency) (50). The disempowerment and anomie created through the colonial experience results in internalized anger and violence directed at the self through substance abuse and suicide (Ibid:49).

The inferiority complex which colonized people experience creates a need within the individual to cleanse of these emotions. Fanon’s theory posits that violence is not only inflicted on the self, but violence as a cleansing force is also inflicted on other members of the colonized community. Internalized anger becomes externalized violence in reserve culture which espouses hatred, aggression, and violence influenced by substance abuse and results in a lowered sense of “community” (Ibid:43). Violence is reproduced in gendered ways too, as men have learned to project their anger onto women. Jaqueline Hookimaw-Witt (2010:11) an Inninew Esquew (or Cree woman) from Attawapiskat explains that Indigenous gender-based violence is a reflection of colonially imposed Western notions of gendered performance, a system which is based on patriarchal domination. Her point here, is that where various indigenous cultures in Canada may have alternative understandings of what “gender” is or means (usually based on interpretations from the observed natural worlds where those cultures are embedded), the

European system of societal organization is based on rewarding some gendered beings, and not others. She writes, that Indigenous understandings of gender were “attacked and destroyed by a society that built itself upon a model of domination” (Ibid). Gender violence further exacerbates material poverty which drives many women to participate in survival sex and other forms of prostitution. It is partially structural violence imposed on these racialized women that has resulted in the disappearance or murder of more than one thousands of Indigenous women in Canada.

Another Indigenous scholar who borrows from Fanon is Glen Sean Coulthard whose focus is on “the politics of recognition.” Coulthard explains that the colonial state of Canada is only willing to recognize Indigenous bodies when and if they are willing to submit to the master/slave role inherent in the colonial relationship. Coulthard argues that the federal government utilizes the “politics of recognition” to reproduce colonial authority and exploitation through land claim settlements, economic development projects, and self-governance initiatives which merely *appear* to “recognize” Indigenous sovereignty (2014:3).

Under the *Indian Act*, traditional ways of governing are replaced by European notions of “democracy” which are “shaped and organized to serve the interests of the Canadian state” (Alfred 2009:44). In the land that is now called Canada, the colonial pursuit has always been rooted in capitalist domination and this system is only intensified by globalization.

## 2.2 Globalization, neoliberalism, and “progress”

At the heart of ideology is the belief that human happiness and well-being is best served by political economic practices which liberate the individual. Liberalism focuses attention on the ‘rights’ of individuals to engage in unbridled entrepreneurship. In order to do so, institutional framework must allow for private property, free trade, and free markets (Harvey 2007:2). Central to liberalism is the concept that markets will self-regulate and the poor will police themselves.

“Globalization” as it is discussed in popular culture is often equated with the notion of the “global village”, signaling a false reality that everyone in the world is now connected through shared prosperity, wage labour, and the opportunity, or “freedom,” to participate in unbridled consumerism. It is implied that in the “global village,” all citizens are granted equal opportunity to compete for resources that are abundant. If anyone goes hungry, it is her own fault for not working hard enough. This belief stems from the protestant work ethic which encouraged people through moral responsibility to accumulate wealth, to engage in wage labour (Giddens 1971:125).

Rather than representing a global ‘village’ of hedonists, the concept of “globalization” is best described as a process whereby goods, people, money, and culture cross international borders (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 2006:1). This process is guided by market driven capitalism.

The process of globalization is not new. As discussed above, rooted in the colonial pursuit was the desire to expand empire and control trade over great distances and socially constructed borders (Shiva 2005:30). However, humans on earth have experienced a major shift in global economic organization over the last century. Improvements in technology, especially since the 1970s, have changed the way that capital is managed; traveling has become more affordable, and so has communication technology (especially since the advent of the internet) and these changes have allowed new markets to open-up. As a result, private businesses have the ability to move their enterprises to wherever they stand to make the most profit. The result is that states must now compete against one another for corporate investment. Global competition puts pressure on state governments to “liberate” their markets by reducing government regulations such as environmental laws, minimum wage laws, and trade tariffs. These policies reflect an ideology generally referred to as “neoliberalism.” Neoliberal ideology is thus rooted in economic transformation, as well as political transformation (Slowey 2001:266). It is through these mechanisms that the private sector has gained much political control over the last half-century. As Vandana Shiva aptly summarizes:

Corporate globalization undermines and subverts national democratic processes by taking economic decisions outside the reach of parliaments and citizens. No

matter which government is elected, it is locked into a series of neoliberal reform policies. Corporate globalization is in effect the death of economic democracy. It gives rise to corporate control and economic dictatorship (2005:6)

As such, neoliberalism encourages the privatization of social services in the name of fiscal restraint and economic interest. The neoliberal mantra is that no matter what the social cost, some industry, is better than no industry (Matthews 2014:119). Under the auspices of globalization and neoliberal ideology, everything becomes commodified; land, water, technology, labour, bodies, intelligence, ideas, education, pollution, war, life, death, and so on. Whereas the exploitation of Indigenous land and bodies has always been a part of Canada's colonial mission, globalization has intensified and complicated Indigenous people's pursuit of self-determination.

## 2.3 Ecological destruction

The Canadian state was built on the destruction and exploitation of Indigenous people's ancestral lands and source of sustenance. Since invasion and subsequent occupation, settlers have disrupted cultural continuity and dispossessed the Indigenous people of practices which are a part of their various cultural identities and survival techniques. In attempts to exterminate the Indigenous population, the people were homogenized by the colonizer through a racialization process which dehumanized them. This dehumanization labelled the Indigenous people as "savages" and this justified their extermination, while also symbolically emptying the land of "people" to create *terra nullius*.

Since colonial invasion, land has been appropriated, exploited, and polluted for settler greed under capitalist ideology. Prior to contact, Indigenous people and cultures had survived for thousands of years, and they were able to do so though living in reciprocal relationships with their local ecosystems. As a result, Indigenous cultures are as diverse as the landscapes in which those cultures are embedded and Canada's landscape varies drastically from coast to coast, north to south. Inherent in living reciprocally with the ecosystem is recognizing that human-beings are only one aspect of a much larger living system that must remain healthy for survival. Varied as Indigenous cultures are, living on the land in sustainable and reciprocal relationships is a commonality between Indigenous cultures and one which demands sensitivity, restraint, and consideration for other beings.

This mentality is threatening to capitalism which is rooted in individualism and competition for resources. Therefore, in order for capitalism to survive in Canada, the reciprocal relationship between humans and the ecosystems in which they are rooted must be severed. Indigenous “development” in Canada relies on shifting dependence away from self-reliance and cultural survival and onto exploitation and competition. The colonial pursuit in Canada has been built on a strategy to remove the surviving Indigenous peoples from their relationships with the land and create new systems of dependence

### 2.3.1 Dependency

Despite myriad Indigenous cultures that exist in Canada, the mechanisms of colonialism operate on colonized bodies in similar ways, highlighting existing cultural resemblances such as the fundamental belief in reciprocity with the ecosystem. Mechanisms of colonialism also create new commonalities among contemporary colonized societies. In Canada, Indigenous cultures must cope with homogenizing pan-Indian policies which share in the ultimate goal of capitalist assimilation and dependence. This model is not new, but rather is a strategy of colonization and the expansion of empire.

In Latin America, the so-called *dependentistas* have identified widespread poverty and underdevelopment as resulting from the contemporary colonial structure of dependence imposed on the economies of colonized countries. *Dependentistas* argue that when peripheral economies are dependent on dominant economies for survival, the result is an imbalance; “the periphery produces what it does not consume, and consumes what it does not produce” (Allahar 1995:105). The dependency model assures that low-skilled labour, needed for the capitalist mode of production, remains in the periphery, while technological and ideological innovation persist in the dominant economies. It is through the imbalanced relationships inherent in colonialism that global inequalities arose. As globalization has increasingly transferred political power to multinational corporations, a new form of colonialism is born. Neo-colonialism is when “former enclaves of colonial production [are] transformed into enclaves controlled no longer by colonialist states, but rather by (multinational) corporations” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979/2001:54).

*Dependentistas* deny that the infiltration of multinational corporations will help to redistribute wealth and balance social inequalities.

Theories developed by the *dependentistas* are being used to identify neo-colonialism in Canada. In particular, Gabrielle Slowey (2009;2008;2001) has criticized the Canadian government for devolving bureaucratic and financial responsibilities to Indigenous governments under a supposed move toward Indigenous sovereignty. In light of new financial responsibilities, industrial growth is presented as a logical solution to gaining access to the finances needed to provide goods such as clean drinking water. Thus, “self-government” as presented by the colonizer, is an extension of neoliberalism which reduces government spending while simultaneously supporting market freedoms.

Far from sovereignty, communities that ratify self-government agreements must work within a governance structure which is dictated by the federal government. Colin Samson explains using the Innu Nation land claim and self-government agreement:

...peoples whose land has been occupied and over which an external sovereignty has been asserted are themselves the petitioners. As petitioners, they are “recognized” only insofar as they concede to the state that they are its subjects. In liberal mind this is an element of citizenship, but as citizens, Indigenous peoples’ independence, sovereignty, and cultural integrity are not being recognized. Through their signatures on a land claim, they simply affirm *their* recognition of the state and, although it scarcely needs it, grants legitimacy of the state by making a “claim” on it. In exchange the state then gives them monies and accords them specific kinds of rights that are of a completely different and vastly diminished order than the rights they formerly had as autonomous peoples. In the process the state determines how Innu, in this case, will be able to orient themselves to the land and how they will be governed. In its powers to accord these new rights, which are in Orwellian fashion termed *self-determination*, Canada formalizes a process of radical cultural disintegration and restriction of Aboriginal law (2014:247)

In a footnote to the agreement, the document states that in signing the agreement, the Innu “hereby cede and release to Canada and the province all the Aboriginal rights which Innu ever had, now have or may in the future have within Canada” (2.12.2fn, quoted in Samson 2014:256). Thus, self-government agreements are part the ongoing colonial project to dispossess the Indigenous people of their lands in order to ensure capitalist



expansion. Land claim agreements are one way that the government can provide legal certainty to corporate investors.

While espousing the liberal language which claims to promote harmony and “reconciliation” in a multicultural country, the government continues to impose restrictions on what “self-government” will or should look like so as to keep the markets free from regulation. Self-government, as such, only encourages “self-sufficiency” by way of partnerships with the private sector which effectively shifts dependency on the state, to dependency corporations—“and the dependence on an external body remains, though the faces change” (Slowey 2001:272).

At the heart of the matter is that promoting economic solutions to deeply rooted social and psychological problems will not work because it does not address the root cause of human suffering as entrenched in colonial dispossession and dependency (Alfred 2009:45). Government’s efforts continue to disconnect Indigenous peoples from their lands, their cultures, and their communities in the name of economic growth. The strategy of reconciliation then, is to recognize “Aboriginalism” through policies which acknowledge racialized Indigenous bodies but which also continue to colonize the mind (Alfred 2009:51). The politics of recognition “generates a desire in the colonized person for non-contentious, cooperative identities, institutions, and strategies for interacting with the colonizer.” (Ibid). When indigenous cultural identities are no longer available, the colonized person must seek out aspects of cultural identity presented by the dominant culture.

### 2.3.2 Environmental Justice

Globalization widens the rift between people’s ability to practice cultural continuity as the rate of industrial growth intensifies. The pace at which Indigenous ancestral lands have been subjected to exploitation, destruction, and poisoning has increased in parallel with the federal government’s mandate for economic growth. The pillar of Canada’s economy has always been resource extraction and as technology has improved, the ability to discover and then extract otherwise precarious resources from the earth has become a profitable endeavour. Legally speaking, 90 percent of land in Canada is considered

“crown land” which can be “rented” and then exploited for resources with proper permission from the provincial or the federal government. The federal government then has a duty to consult an Indigenous group “when the Crown contemplates conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Indigenous or Treaty rights” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2011:6).

Much of “crown land” is subject to land claims from Indigenous communities who assert that their traditional practices include occupation of that land for various purposes. Naturally, the environmental destruction that is inevitable for industrial growth has potential to impact the way that Indigenous people interact with that land, otherwise known as “Aboriginal rights”. However, the crown’s “duty to consult” has been ignored or otherwise glossed over countless times which has resulted in the lands and bodies of Indigenous people being poisoned. Some well-known Canadian examples are: Grassy Narrows and mercury poisoning (Shkilnyk 1985), Aamjiwnaag and endocrine disruptors (Wiebe 2013), The Lubicon Cree and the Tar Sands (Ominayak and Thomas 2009), and The James Bay Cree and hydroelectric projects (Haluza-DeLay, O’Riley, Cole, and Agyeman 2009).

At the receiving end of industrial externalities remains the Indigenous population. Just as the *Indian Act* homogenizes and controls, so too does resource extraction. Industrial growth disrupts the myriad Indigenous cultures that have been practiced on these lands since time immemorial. It treats Indigenous bodies and lands as receptacles for pollutants. It commodifies bodies to be sold for labour, as well as the land and resources where those bodies dwell. Resource extraction destroys ecosystems and poisons life-giving entities, forcing people to alter their relationships with their surroundings. When land and waters are poisoned, people cannot eat fish, animals, or plants which grow there.

Where the reserve system and residential schools have limited the way that Indigenous people can interact with their ancestral territories, resource extraction threatens to sever it for good. Indigenous ways of knowing, as rooted in reciprocal relationships with environmental surroundings, are a direct threat to the capitalist pursuit because indigenous philosophies are inherently built on environmental and cultural sustainability.

Corporate globalization is not sustainable because it is based on market laws dedicated to increasing profits. Laws for maximizing profits are based on: the privatization of all things; externalizing costs; manipulating the democratic process; as well as blocking access to “the commons” such as clean air, water, and land (Shiva 2013:264).

Capitalism, which drives the market economy, survives through privatizing everything. In recent history, pollution which hangs in the air that we breathe has been privatized through carbon emissions trading (Shiva 2005:16). These are the same carbon emissions that are warming the earth. As Erin Freeland Ballantyne articulates (2014:81), “[w]ith climate change, capitalism has now entered the atmosphere” which threatens ecosystems, including human life, everywhere.

### 2.3.2.1 Climate Change

Climate change is a very real crisis for life on earth in the twenty-first century. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is composed of an international body of scientists, who have observed that “[h]uman influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems” (2014:1). Since industrialization, each decade has been warmer than the last causing the earth’s surface to warm (Ibid).

The gradual warming of the earth, which includes warming oceans, is melting the arctic ice and subsequently causing the sea level to rise. Increased global temperatures have resulted in increased “extreme weather” events such as droughts, floods, hurricanes, and cyclones (Shiva 2008:10). Humans inhabit the earth where extreme weather events occur, meaning that there is a very clear social element to climate change. In the global North the impacts of climate change are compounded. Trainor and colleagues (2009:148) have pointed out that in recent decades, the arctic temperature has risen at nearly double that of the rest of the world. Rising temperatures means that sea ice is melting, changing the landscape, and causing severe storms which are eroding the coastal regions and causing communities to relocate. Ice is freezing later in the autumn and thawing earlier in the spring, creating hazards for hunting and traveling. Elders who are

accustomed to interpreting changes in weather patterns for hunting and sustenance gathering are no longer familiar with their surroundings as they are being transformed so quickly. Global warming is changing life on earth for everybody, but the effects are disproportionately absorbed by people who live in the Northern regions of the world, in particular the arctic and sub-arctic.

Industrialization has another, very serious, impact on the people of the North, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are fat-soluble toxins which are stored in the fatty tissues of organisms. Carnivores at the top of the food chain have the highest amount of bioaccumulation of POPs as the toxins are passed from one animal to another through the consumption of fats. As such, polar bears and humans have the highest concentration of bioaccumulated POPs (Trainor et al 2009:146). Persistent Organic Pollutants are industrial and agricultural byproducts from the creation of “medicines, pesticides, lubricants, solvents, adhesives, fabrics, textiles, and plastics” (Ibid). POPs are disproportionately distributed in the arctic regions of the world, far from where they were produced, a clear example of environmental justice in the North.

### 2.3.2.2 Persistent Organic Pollutants

That Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) collect in the Northern parts of the world is due to a phenomenon known as the “grasshopper effect” or global distillation. POPs generally travel as dust particles through evaporation caused by warm air. As that warm air moves north, it gets trapped in colder weather where it can no longer be evaporated and becomes condensed. The accumulation of POPs is also attributed to rivers which release into Northern bodies of water, ocean currents, as well as through species migration (Burleson and Dougherty 2010:60).

Northern Indigenous peoples place high spiritual and cultural value on harvesting wild foods, generally referred to as “country food” in the Canadian arctic and sub-arctic regions (Thompson 2005:47). Most fish, birds, mammals and other animals contain high levels of POPs in the North, making hunting, trapping, and fishing a toxic liability. POPs begin to accumulate in the human body and other mammals, in utero and then through breast milk. That toxins are passed to the young is particularly dangerous as they do not

have fully developed immune systems, nervous systems, brains, and bodies (Burleson and Dougherty 2010:62). Various studies on POP levels in humans have identified Northern mothers as being the primary receptacles for toxins, likely due to higher levels of body fat in combination with the consumption of traditional foods during pregnancy (examples include: Fångström et al 2002; Dewailly 1989; Rogan et al 1986).

Persistent Organic Pollutants are carcinogens that have been known to cause various kinds of cancer, as well as reproductive disorders including miscarriages, and premature birth. Neurological difficulties, nervous system disorders, immune suppression, developmental difficulties in fetuses and small infants, and an increased chance of developing type two diabetes, cirrhosis, and hepatitis are also commonly associated with POP accumulation (Burleson and Dougherty 2010:60). That the land, food, and bodies of people in the North have been toxified has serious implications for cultural continuity and holistic well-being of Northern Indigenous people. Food insecurity is also a serious threat caused by climate change and toxins in the North which aids in solidifying dependence on the capitalist system.

### 2.3.2.3 Water and Food Security

That the harvest and consumption of traditional foods has become dangerous in the global North is a significant challenge to food security. “Food security means being able to obtain a nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local non-emergency sources” (Thompson 2005:55-56). The combination of a changing landscape and the presence of Persistent Organic Pollutants in game meat means that Indigenous peoples in the North must supplement their diets with purchased foods. The need to purchase food presents another very real problem in that in order to do so, people must possess money.

Widespread material poverty is a serious issue in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions where jobs are scarce, formal education is little-attended, social welfare is inadequate, and the cost of living is much higher due to the price of importing goods from the South (Ibid:56). Many rural northern communities are only accessible by winter roads or by air during the warmer months, amplifying import costs. This means that the cost to build a

home is significantly more expensive in the North, resulting in frequent overcrowding as families seek shelter in freezing winter conditions.

Access to shelter is difficult, as is access to clean water. Attaining statistics about clean drinking water in Indigenous communities is difficult as the federal government does not procure data for all regions, meaning that the number of water advisories for all Indigenous communities in Canada is likely much higher than what is reported by Health Canada. However, excluding British Columbia and regions north of 60 degrees latitude, there were 134 drinking water advisories for First Nations in Canada as of December 2014 (Health Canada 2015). An overwhelming majority of these are located in the rural sub-Arctic.

The “crisis” of water in Indigenous communities is made possible by neoliberal ideology which delegates the burden of service delivery to local communities. White, Murphy, and Spence (2012:2) explain that the federal government’s mandate is to provide the “funding” for water services while the band provides the “service.” Yet, the government does not provide full funding, the band is still responsible for 20percent of operation and maintenance costs. In addition, Band leaders are expected to design, build, and then operate their water treatment facilities, ensuring that employees have been properly trained (Ibid).

As previously discussed, material wealth in rural Northern locations is scarce, as is educational attainment. It is not surprising then, that so many Indigenous communities in the North do not have the resources to provide and maintain water service delivery. The government has unloaded financial and bureaucratic responsibility for water service delivery under the umbrella of “self-determination”. When access to clean drinking water is not possible, blame is pushed onto the community, rather than onto the government. In addition, where there is no clean water, water must be imported and then purchased. Under this structure, the only way for people and communities to access clean water is to engage in capitalist modes of production. Either, bands must accumulate enough financial and social capital to allow them to operate and maintain a water treatment facility. Or, people and families must obtain enough money to purchase

the means of survival. The need for money to be exchanged for life-giving resources has created very troublesome living conditions in the North of what is now called “Canada”.

In response to issues of food security in the North, the federal government has created a program called Nutrition North which is meant to provide subsidies for food retailers, resulting in lower prices for Northern consumers. In 2014 the Fall Report of the Auditor General included an assessment of the Nutrition North program. The Auditor General found several serious problems with the program, identifying concerns that it does not effectively or adequately address the fact that people do not have access to life-giving sustenance in rural Northern regions. Specifically, the Auditor General explains that the program does not base community eligibility on need. Rather, Nutrition North bases eligibility on a community’s involvement in an older food-related program from the late 1990s called “Food Mail,” and bases the level of subsidy received by the frequency of a community’s former use of Food Mail. “Consequently, community eligibility is based on past usage instead of current need. As a result, there may be other isolated northern [sic] communities, not benefiting from the subsidy, where access to affordable, nutritious food may be an issue” (Office of the Auditor General: para 6.18). In addition, almost all of the fixed yearly budget is allocated to subsidies, meaning that little money is used to monitor the effectiveness of the program (para 6.6). The suspected result is that rather than subsidies being passed to consumers, it is possible that Northern retailers are charging the same high prices, but incurring more profit (para 6.24).

A list of eligible food for subsidies is recorded on the Nutrition North program’s website, and includes perishable and non-perishable foods such as processed cheese slices, margarine, “canned pork-based luncheon meats”, canola oil, bananas, oranges, and canned corn (2014). All of the foods listed on the website are staples of the global food system which is built on chemical-intensive, highly mechanized, large-scale methods of food production (Norberg-Hodge, Merrifield, and Gorelick 2002:3).

The global food system relies on government subsidies for monocropping and other large-scale agribusiness strategies in order to produce food that has a longer shelf-life and is therefore marketable to distant places. Canada is one of the largest producers and

exporters of agricultural products in the world (Agriculture and Agrifood Canada 2015). Therefore, by encouraging the production and consumption of mass-produced food, the Canadian government is stimulating economic growth. The result is that biodiversity is killed while cheap, chemical-laden food floods the global food markets (Norberg-Hodge, Merrifield, and Gorelick 2002:104-105). As Vandana Shiva aptly points out:

Humanity has consumed more than 80,000 edible plants throughout its evolution; more than 3,000 have been used consistently. However, we now rely on just eight crops to provide 75 per cent of the world's food, and with genetic engineering, production has narrowed down to three crops—corn, soya, canola (2013:197).

As it becomes dangerous for Northern peoples to harvest traditional food, they are increasingly being encouraged to adopt the food habits of the Canadian South which are created by the global market. Large-scale monocropping dominates the global food market, and in particular it demands the use of pesticides which contain Persistent Organic Pollutants. The result is that the Nutrition North program is subsidizing the same food-system that is making traditional subsistence hunting impossible. This is an example of market-based solutions to market-based problems which only deepens inequalities and aids in solidifying dependency on capitalist modes of production.

By providing subsidies to retailers for corporate food, the government is opening new markets for large-scale agribusiness in the North while also appearing to take action and alleviate hunger. The program does not address the root cause of hunger in the North, nor does it make food more affordable, nutritionally diverse, or culturally appropriate. Market-driven capitalism is the *cause* of problems like climate change and hunger, it is not the solution. The capitalist system as such creates relationships of dependency that reward corporate giants and keep the poor marginalized.

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### 2.3.3 The meaning of “development”

Much of the Canadian federal government’s mandate for “reconciliation” is based on settling recent land claims so as to make Canada more attractive to corporate investment in resource development (Ibid; Blackburn 2005; Altamirano-Jiménez 2010). Given its huge reserves of crude oil, natural gas, and lumber in areas that are subject to land claims by Indigenous communities in Canada, it is within the federal government’s interest to outline clear legal boundaries for corporations to navigate. Settling land claims allows corporations the freedom of knowing who they must approach and negotiate with in order to have access to land, and also provides reassurance that the project will not be stopped due to a lawsuit from a community claiming that their rights and/or title are being infringed (Blackburn 2005:587). In this context, settling land claims commodifies the commons by creating a legal framework for exploiting and then marketing the resources therein. Under the guise of self-government, communities are left to negotiate development deals without government support, supervision, or intervention (Matthews 2014:120); communities must compete between each other for capital investment; and social stratification is likely to increase between communities and among individuals within communities (Slowey 2001; 2008;2009). This is especially problematic when capital investment is sold as a cure-all for a variety of social, economic, and cultural problems

“The ideology of development has been so naturalized that it is often difficult to extricate its influences from the larger political, economic and cultural processes” (Subramaniam, Bever, and Schultz 2002:201). Much of the literature on Indigenous communities in Canada focuses on social pathology such as substance abuse, high suicide rates, unemployment, violence, and incarceration. Access to healthy food, clean water, and other means of subsistence is scarce in Indigenous communities, particularly in the north, amplifying social problems. As such, impoverished Indigenous communities in Canada have been labelled the “fourth world,” meaning that they must endure “third world” conditions while living in “first world” countries (Raybould 2006:3).

The rhetoric of “underdevelopment” serves as a legitimating force for corporate penetration on Indigenous lands in Canada and elsewhere. In development discourse, the rhetoric of human rights is used by neoliberal governance to “neutralize, disqualify and discipline Indigenous collective rights in a way that does not challenge the neo-liberal economic project itself” (Altamirano-Jiménez 2009:195). Instead, the Canadian state focuses on encouraging large-scale resource extraction projects, managed by transnational corporations with the promise of creating “jobs” for individuals living in Indigenous communities.

Large-scale resource extraction further dispossesses communities of the land where their cultures and identities are embedded, as well as their ability to subsist with minimal exchange of money. Of course, Indigenous people are not immune to development rhetoric nor are they passive victims of globalization. Though in some cases, development ideology may conflict with cultural beliefs or personal aspirations, participating in development projects is often perceived to be the only means to feed and clothe families (Slowey 2001:273). Thus, development discourse—as an extension of neoliberal governance—preaches self-sufficiency but is merely shifting dependency away from the state and toward wage labour. “Individuals who participate in extractive industries become dependent on the income from their jobs in securing their survival, and they become increasingly invested in defending the industries as a consequence” (Waziyatawin 2012:74). With less state intervention from government and cut backs to social services, dependence on corporations becomes increasingly dangerous as access to services gradually requires an exchange of money. Thus, large corporate investment appears to be the best solution to Indigenous “underdevelopment”.

## Chapter 3

### 3 Government and corporate collusion: the coercive use of Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs)

I am inspired by Theodor Adorno who said that sociology can be used as a mediation between disciplines (1968), and thus, in this chapter I am attempting to point out the sociological moments which are found in the trenches between the disciplines of politics, business, economics, and law. My attempt, as such, is to “remedy the scholarly division of labour by relating the subject matter of scholarship back to the whole, which is society, yet cannot be grasped as an immediate fact” (Ibid:108).

Resource extraction is the pillar of the Canadian economy. Many untapped resources lie in the Northern Regions of Canada where the majority of the population is Indigenous. New technologies have now made the extraction of these resources a profitable endeavor. This means that communities are quite suddenly being faced with the possibility of a number of large-scale industrial growth projects on ancestral lands. The vague language of “Aboriginal law” dictates that communities must be “consulted” before extraction can begin. However, the law does not specify what meaningful consultation entails. When consultation has not occurred in the past, Indigenous communities have erupted in protest, and this has slowed, or even stopped projects from moving forward.

Marx said that “[t]he bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations to society” (1888/1978). That Indigenous protests have slowed profit-making means that the bourgeois authorities, as represented by the state and the corporate elite, must evolve their strategies in order to gain access to Indigenous lands and labour without the risk of protest.

As an extension of neoliberalism, the newest tool developed by the bourgeoisie is the Impact and Benefit Agreement (IBA). IBAs create legal space for corporations to occupy Indigenous lands so that projects can move forward quickly, investments can swiftly be recovered, and economic growth at the corporate and state level can be secured. In doing

so, IBAs create the illusion of Indigenous “recognition”, while simultaneously exploiting their land for resources and their bodies for labour.

Whereas IBAs have most generally been initiated by corporations in the past, recent government decisions have mandated their use. Though this may appear on the surface to be a form of government regulation, government directions to incorporate IBAs into resource extraction is but a mere extension of neoliberal *laissez-faire* policy which continues to devolve the role of the state to the private sector. Gradually, IBAs have become a part of the “consultation” process.

I argue that IBAs represent corporate and government collusion in the strategy to gain access to Indigenous territory. Like the numbered treaties, IBAs are part of legal framework which seeks to convince Indigenous communities to “legally” surrender their land to outside parties. Corporations and governments manufacture consent through power differentials which place the community at a disadvantage. Internal differentiation within communities is exploited so that those Indigenous people who are at the negotiation table, are also the same people who stand to benefit the most from resource extraction. Further, material poverty and a dependence on the state to provide services which it does not adequately provide, places added pressure on leaders to sign Impact and Benefit Agreements as fast as possible.

Though IBAs are meant to represent corporate social responsibility, in operation they prove quite harmful. Rather than helping to alleviate social problems, IBAs make them worse through exacerbating inequalities and further severing Indigenous people from the land.

In the present chapter, I seek to locate Canadian “Aboriginal law” within neoliberal ideology. I begin by mapping the role that liberalism has had on society’s concept of “rights”.

### 3.1 Liberalism and the discourse of “rights”

Since colonization, the pace of global trade has increased steadily. Many historical events and processes have unfolded over time which continue to feed the momentum of

economic growth. Early in the colonial process, globalization was expressed as trade over international boundaries. Gradually, European colonizers began to occupy other lands. During early occupation, it was recognized that Indigenous people had some degree of autonomy and ‘rights’ as expressed, for example, by the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* which simultaneously confirmed that the Indigenous population had “title” to land while also laying the legal framework to extinguish it (Frideres 2011:6). Thus, the “rights” and “title” of Indigenous peoples have been a part of the colonial conversation since European invasion. (Indigenous Foundations 2015).

Over time, these conversations have evolved, but still circulate around the idea that Indigenous peoples have inherent “rights”. Recently, many global shifts have influenced rights based legal discussions in Canada and internationally. Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (2010) reminds us that in the mid-twentieth century, shockwaves of rights-based consciousness were felt around the world as decolonizing movements created many new independent states. Also, during this time, activists in the United States organized to form advocacy groups such as Red Power, Black Power and the Civil Rights movement. At their root, these initiatives called for the expansion of civil liberties. While global activism was on the rise, improvements in technology allowed international news to spread more quickly, while also increasing the pace at which global trade could take place. It was during this time that neoliberal ideology became entrenched in capitalist societies. The outcome has been a legal framework, reinforced by institutions like the United Nations, which Indigenous people have been drawing from since (194).

Jean Bethke-Elshtain (1993) reminds us that originally, “[r]ights were designed primarily as immunities, as a way to protect us from overweening governmental power”. However, as time passed, “rights” became synonymous with personal entitlements, “me and my rights”, rather than reflective of a person’s involvement with community (15). Neoliberalism encourages individualist notions of entitlement and disguises them as personal “rights” to own and dispose of property (Altamirano-Jiménez 2010:195).

A rights-based discourse that focuses on private ownership complicates cultural interpretations of collective possession, collective occupation, and collective

responsibility. This is most obvious in the recent decision to allow individual members of the Nisga'a Nation of British Columbia the "right" to privately own and sell their ancestral lands. The normative argument behind this decision is that Indigenous people have been denied the "right" to participate in private property ownership of their ancestral lands, and that this has prevented them from using land as collateral for a loan (CBC 2013a). For example, a Globe and Mail headline which describes the Nisga'a story claims that "[p]rivate property is a *native right*" (Helin 2011, my emphasis).

However, Pam Palmater, a Mi'kmaq lawyer and scholar, has argued that private property ownership of Indigenous lands is the first step in losing the land for good, as it could be sold to anyone, including non-Nisga'a (CBC 2013a). Once land is privatized, corporations and government would no longer be subject to "Aboriginal law" which, until recently, has complicated resource extraction and mineral rights.

Just as neoliberal "rights" based discourse has changed the way that people and governments think about things they are entitled to ("rights"), corporations have also changed the way that they 'do business' in response to this liberalizing historical trend.

### 3.2 The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility

Like globalization, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not a new concept. Rather, the social responsibility that businesses possess in supporting and improving the societies where they operate have been in discussion for centuries. However, the discourse of liberalism has changed the nature of these conversations over the last fifty years (Carroll 1999:268).

The responsibility of business, as explained by Andreas Georg Scherer and Guido Palazzo is not only to operate within the confines of the law, but to go beyond what the law requires when there are regulation gaps, "when the legal system is imperfect or legal rules are incomplete" (1999:1). Inherent in this idea, is that businesses ought to possess a voluntary willingness to do things, such as self-regulate, even when they are not legally required to do.

The voluntary aspect of corporate social responsibility seems to have entered the literature during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Carroll 1999:273-274). This coincides with the intensification of neoliberal ideology which calls for the deregulation of markets and the loosening of profit-prohibiting laws which allow corporations the freedom to be headquartered in one state, while operating in another.

The power that corporations have gained as a result is marked. With fewer regulations, companies have the ability to divide labour and other operating costs by sourcing from wherever represented the greatest efficiency (Schrer and Palazzo 1999:7). The biggest companies have thus become “multinational” or “transnational” corporations, as they possess the ability to move labour, money, and other aspects of business to any country that represented the greatest potential for profit. This means that multinational corporations are often headquartered in places which are geographically far from production. This also means that transnational corporations have the power to decide which legal systems they want to engage with (Ibid). That the biggest companies are transnational corporations means that environmental and social harm is “by its very nature mobile and easily subject to transference” (Nurse 2014:94).

That the world’s largest corporations operate in multiple countries makes for difficulty in creating clear legal boundaries for regulating CSR. Westaphalian sovereignty which guides international law prohibits a clear path through which legal enforcement is possible when the corporate actor is stationed all over. As such, some legal scholars have suggested the development of “transnational law” to account for this globalized reality (Seck 2012:1364).

Nurse (2014) points out that there is no internationally agreed legal definition of “environmental damage” for which corporations must abide, though individual states and even international law account for certain activities that cause environmental harm (93). Thus, it is left to corporations to define for themselves the meaning of “environmental damage” and to control for it in ways that do not hinder profits. If a particular activity *does* break the law in a host country, fines are generally not effective in curtailing future behaviour. Sara Seck argues that fines “fail to convey the message that serious corporate

offenses are socially intolerable, instead converting corporate criminality from a wrong against society into a cost of doing business” (2011:145). Given their status in contract law, IBAs too are difficult to legally enforce. But, like other forms of CSR doctrine, fines are doled out and paid when necessary and these costs are absorbed by the expenditures of everyday business.

Though multinational corporations are some of the most powerful institutions in the world, they are still subject to market competition. Corporations rely on investment from stockholders in order to prevent corporate take-overs. CEOs and managers are pressured to limit activities to those which will ensure exponential profits and continued investment (Schrer and Palazzo 1999:8). That corporations are stationed in countries where operating costs are cheap, means that companies too-often operate in countries with violence, starvation, disease, civil war, and other problems.

Liberalism dictates a strict division of labour between economic realm and the political realm. This means that subjecting corporations to intense legal or moral regulations are perceived by liberals to be a “threat to democracy” (Ibid:12). Georg Schrer and Palazzo provide an excellent example:

In 1993, Shell was confronted with a massive but nonviolent protest of the Ogoni People in Nigeria. Led by the writer Ken Saro Wiwa, the Ogoni protested against the fact that the money for the oil extracted from their land disappeared into the pockets of the corrupt Nigerian military junta while for them there was nothing left but a wasted and highly polluted territory. When Saro Wiwa was arrested as a rebellion leader, human rights groups urged Shell to use its influence on the Nigerian government to prevent them from executing him. At that time, Shell Group Chairman Herkströter argued that the corporation as an economic actor had no licence to interfere with political processes and that Shell preferred to remain politically neutral (1999:9).

Thus, corporations engage with politics only through voluntary philanthropy or through lobbying (Ibid:11). In this way, CSR doctrine provides an opportunity for corporate self-promotion as ethically, environmentally, and socially responsible while obfuscating serious harms.

The voluntary nature of CSR is a two-fold problem. First, that companies choose to participate in CSR without legally binding definitions and boundaries means that



corporations are able to hide serious harms from the public. Second, voluntary CSR allows corporations the opportunity to appear altruistic in the public eye, convincing consumers that purchasing their products is not only ethically safe but that consumerism itself is contributing to a greater cause. Through CSR campaigns, corporations attempt to sway public opinion into believing that purchasing their products is part of living a moral and environmentally responsible life. Examples include Hitachi's "Plant for Planet—the billion tree planting campaign" in Thailand (Hitachi 2015); Jet Blue's "Soar with Reading" campaign which claims to provide books to impoverished children in unnamed places (Jetblue 2015); and "(Product) Red" which aims to "fight AIDS" with collected proceeds from garments made by companies like Belvedere Vodka; Bed Bath and Beyond; and Claro (Red 2015). In this way, CSR campaigns have used scientific psychology to "incite overconsumption, mostly by circumventing our fragile abilities to make rational choices" (Jones 2014:1). The result is that even when laws or court rulings are able to force corporations to alter their business dealings, companies will often promote the resulting changes as voluntary because it encourages product consumption (Greenpeace 2015).

Resulting from liberalism which is opposed to strict regulations and laws, the United Nations Global Impact (UNGC) as emerged as a voluntary program which encourages businesses to align their operations with "universally accepted" principles in the areas of labour, human rights, anti-corruption, and environmental harm (United Nations Global Impact 2015). However, in a ten-year study of nearly 3000 U.S.-based UNGC business participants, Berliner and Prakash (2015) found that most participating companies avoid making costly but crucial changes to environmental and human rights practices, but they will make superficial changes so as to appear responsible (116). Berliner and Prakash criticize the UNGC for providing corporations the opportunity to "bluewash". Bluewashing allows corporations the ability to "take advantage of reputational and goodwill benefits emanating from program membership, especially because the program is sponsored by the UN" (Ibid).

It is worth noting here that "greenwashing" has become a commonly used term to describe businesses who claim to practice environmental responsibility but spend more

money on advertising their “green” campaigns than actually making important changes to business operations (Greenpeace 2015)

In Canada, neoliberalism unfolds within “Aboriginal law” as the granting of “rights” which are rooted in individualism and economic ‘freedom.’

### 3.3 Industrial growth and “Aboriginal law”

In June 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada granted the Tsilhqot’in First Nation “Aboriginal title” over a significant portion of land in British Columbia, this case is referred to as the Williams decision. No other Indigenous group has successfully proved title over land in Canada, marking the Tsilhqot’in case an unprecedented and landmark decision for Indigenous communities. Moreover, the Supreme Court ruling clarified some of the meaning, policy, and procedure for governments to begin dealing with Indigenous communities who are granted title, as well as those who have unsettled land claims.

Since the Williams decision was announced, the mainstream media has warned of the “dangers” of granting “Aboriginal title” for the Canadian economy (some examples are: Baines and Veldhuis 2014; Gibson 2014; Hildebrandt 2014; and Simpson 2014 to name but a few). The general sentiment expressed in these media reports is that granting title will create “uncertainty” and “chaos” for resource extraction and will effectively hurt the Canadian economy. However, I argue that the recent Tsilhqot’in decision, progressive as it may seem, results from neoliberal ideology which aims to seduce Indigenous communities into capitalist assimilation, thus creating a stable political environment for corporate investment. Granting “Aboriginal title” to the Tsilhqot’in does not create “chaos” or “uncertainty” but rather, it creates confidence that transnational corporate investment projects will move forward quickly and without protest.

Granting title is part of a larger trend of settling land claims so as to create legal certainty for industrial growth. In the face of systemic and widespread Indigenous material poverty, the Canadian government must appear that they are working to remedy the colonially created racial stain that is Canada’s “Indian problem.” Seen through this lens,

“Aboriginal title” represents another normative market-based solutions to systemic Indigenous poverty, which has converted collective spiritual relationships to the earth, into questions of ownership, royalties, and entitlements. Below I outline the legal plane which guides resource extraction on Indigenous lands.

### 3.3.1 Developing Indigenous lands

Before a company can begin any large-scale industrial growth on ancestral Indigenous land, “consultation” between the federal and provincial governments and local Indigenous communities must occur. Section 35(1) of the Canadian constitution affirms the rights of Indigenous people which are said to include Indian, Inuit, and Métis. The affirmation of these rights makes them unconditional and as such will take precedence over any other common laws which may conflict with “Aboriginal rights”, with certain exceptions. However, the constitution does not clarify the content of these rights, that is, what the ‘rights’ actually are. Therefore, defining rights has been the burden of Indigenous communities who must bring these issues to the court system (White, Maxim, and Spence 2004:21).

Generally, “Aboriginal rights” have referred to traditional activities such as hunting or fishing. “Aboriginal rights” do not necessarily refer to rights to the land or the resources therein. The law proclaims to represent that since Indigenous societies are not homogenous, “Aboriginal rights” are not homogenous either and are decided on a case-by-case basis (Ibid:25). Most importantly, since “Aboriginal rights” do not refer to legal possession of land, the federal and provincial governments have approved many large-scale industrial projects, in the past, without meaningful consultation from local communities. The result has been public demonstrations and legal action taken up by local Indigenous people. A clear example of such activism is that of the Lubicon Cree who have been resisting large-scale oil, gas, and logging exploitation on unceded Lubicon land since 1979 (Ominayak and Thomas 2009).

Similarly, “Aboriginal title” is a concept that has been left to the courts to clarify. “Aboriginal title”, refers to rights to the land and resources therein. Though similar to private property ownership (otherwise referred to as *fee simple*), it has been determined

by the courts that “Aboriginal title” is distinctly different for three reasons. First, “Aboriginal title” existed before Crown sovereignty, whereas common law property ownership arose afterward. Secondly, the land may not be used in such a way as to break the Indigenous group’s cultural connection to it. Thirdly, “Aboriginal title” is collective in nature; the land is said to belong to all members of the “Aboriginal nation” in question (McNeil 2001:323). Within these limits, “Aboriginal title” gives a particular nation the right to exclusive occupation and use of the land and resources where title was proven. “Aboriginal title” is generally only applicable to lands that were not “surrendered” through treaties.

Recently, the Tsilhqot’in Nation in British Columbia became the first nation to prove “Aboriginal title” in Canada’s Supreme Court, this is commonly referred to as the “Williams decision”. Not only was this case a landmark decision, but the ruling further clarified the meaning and rights inherent in the concept of “Aboriginal title”. Most notably, it is no longer enough to consult with an Indigenous community who has “proved” title of their ancestral land. Consent must now be given by the title holders before any incursion to the land by an outside party. The Chief Justice also confirmed the need to consult in a meaningful way with Indigenous groups who have unsettled land claims (McLachlin 2014: para 2).

On the one hand, the decision to grant legal title represents official recognition that the Tsilhqot’in people have occupied their land since “time immemorial”. On the surface, recognition and visibility of Indigenous people in discussions regarding land and resources is a big step for Indigenous people in the justice system. However, the language used to explain the decision to grant “Aboriginal title” is steeped in neoliberal discourse which honours and encourages capitalist assimilation. As such, the claimant community must prove their title to the land through a specific legal “test”.

The legal test to prove “Aboriginal title” largely came from a previous case known as *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1998). In this case, Chief Justice Lamer set the precedent for a legal test that, if passed, would “prove” title to the land. Lamer held that the legal test should show *sufficient, continuous, and exclusive* pre-sovereignty

occupation of land (para 143). What Justice McLachlin did in the Williams decision, was to clarify what each of these mean.

Although Chief Justice McLachlin shows great empathy and compassion in her decision, Justice McLachlin is working within an ideological frame which does not neatly apply to Indigenous peoples. The laws were invented by the colonizer and continue to be.

For example, in order to demonstrate “sufficiency”, the Indigenous group must prove that before sovereignty they controlled and/or owned the land and would have signaled this to third parties interested in accessing the land:

There must be evidence of a strong presence on or over the land claimed, manifesting itself in acts of occupation that could reasonably be interpreted as demonstrating that the land in question belonged to, was controlled by, or was under the exclusive stewardship of the claimant group (2014: para 38)

Notions of private property and competition for the land are assumed here to be in existence prior to European invasion. I do not mean to imply that these notions were not present among Indigenous communities, since clearly the Tsilhqot’in were successful in proving their “sufficient” occupation of the land. However, it cannot be assumed that any one group *exclusively* managed particular parts of land in all cases. For example, the Innu are a distinct nomadic people who roamed the lands which expand over the place commonly referred to as “the Québec and Labrador Peninsula”. The Innu also historically shared this land with the Inuit. Further, the land which the Innu occupied occasionally overlapped with the Cree people of the James Bay and Hudson Bay (Wadden 1991:21-22). The complicated geographies which make up the individual and collective experiences of living on the “land” makes for a difficult case in proving “Aboriginal title”. “Even more fundamentally, it might be asked why the onus is on Indigenous peoples to prove their own title as against the European colonizers when we all know that they were here occupying lands when the newcomers arrived” (McNeil 2001:324).

Chief Justice McLachlin sites “reconciliation” as being the “raison-d’être” for justifying “Aboriginal title”. As such, she writes that the process of reconciliation must take into account the interests of “Aboriginal people” as well as the “broader public” (2014: para

82). Tellingly, she further extrapolates that infringement of Indigenous title could occur if it was in the broader public's interest. Justice McLachlin cites previous case law from *Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia* to explain instances when it may be in the broader public's interest to infringe on Indigenous title land:

“In my opinion, development of agriculture, forestry, mining, and hydroelectric power, the general economic development of the interior of British Columbia, protection of the environment or endangered species, the building of infrastructure, and the settlement of foreign populations to support those aims are the kinds of objectives that are consistent with this purpose, and in principle, can justify the infringement of [A]boriginal title. (Para 83, quoted from Lamer 1997: para 165)

Taking this into account, it is humorous that the public reaction to the Williams decision posits it as a “landmark”—or anything other than neoliberalism. In the Williams decision, the “rights” and supposed “freedom” of the Tsilhqot’in are highlighted as a chance for the Indigenous to “finally” prosper from the land. However, the subtext is that if the Indigenous community does not want to develop their land, the government will step in and do it for them.

It is not surprising that in such a “historical” and “important” ruling there remains such a large caveat for infringement of “Aboriginal title land”. Especially given that provincial governments have jurisdiction over natural resources and “Aboriginal title” is protected by federal law, it is telling that this exception has been carried forward. Further, developing land requires not only federal regulation, but also occupation of the land as well as extracting resources from it. Analysis of the ruling from the present angle “looks more like expropriation than infringement, one is left wondering how this kind of treatment of the constitutional rights of the Aboriginal peoples can be justified, especially if the governments doing the taking (the provinces) have no jurisdiction over Aboriginal title” (McNeil 2001:325).

The Williams decision is written in such a way that “broader public interest” becomes synonymous with “the market economy”. Consistent with neoliberal ideology, the message is that “development” is for the greater good of Canadians and so if Indigenous communities do not want to develop their land then the government will. In this context,

it becomes clear how recent land claim settlements have become about “how to frame Indigenous empowerment in such a way that the market continues to be politically possible” (Altamirano-Jiménez 2009:195).

As mentioned above, an important clarification provided by Justice McLachlin is that should an Indigenous group be granted title, then consent must be given by the community before the government or a third party may lay a title claim on it. Further, McLachlin urged that in circumstances where Indigenous communities have unsettled land claims, then the Crown must “consult in good faith” before ‘developing’ the land (2014: para 89).

As we have learned from the past, “consult in good faith” is vague, and not interpreted the same way by all stake holders. It is vague language such as this which has allowed corporations and government to ‘develop’ projects which, as it turned out, were unwelcome ‘developments’ by local Indigenous communities; the creation of a golf course in Oka is but one example (see Obomsawin 1993). The law, as it is written, still gives corporations the permission to “develop” land that is the traditional ancestral lands of other people, without consent.

It must be further recognized that consultation, does not mean consent. The courts ought to take a lesson from their own ruling in regards to sexual consent laws. In a 1999 Supreme Court ruling on sexual consent, Justice Beverly McLachlin (the same Justice McLachlin in the Tsilhqot’in case) states:

The specious defense of implied consent (consent implied by law), as applied in this case, rests on the assumption that unless a woman protests or resists, she should be “deemed” to consent. On appeal, the idea also surfaced that if a woman is not modestly dressed, she is deemed to consent. Such stereotypical assumptions find their roots in many cultures, including our own. They no longer, however, find a place in Canadian law (The Walrus 2015:23)

McLachlin makes it clear in the above case, that “implied consent” or “consent implied by law” is unacceptable in regards to women’s bodies, this should also extend to the land—especially considering that when the land is poisoned, people’s bodies are poisoned too. What is lost in so much legalism and bureaucracy is the human element of

land and industrial development. For some people, like the Omushkegowuk and the Innu, land is an extension of the body, it is a sacred part of a people's identity. What legalism misses in detaching from the human experience, is the very personal, spiritual, emotional, and physical relationships that so many people and communities experience within ecology. Especially when we are considering the mining industry—projects which involve violently drilling holes in the earth against the wishes of those who are responsible for its well-being—"Aboriginal title" here reads as a legal framework which allows for rape.

Just like in situations where there is a power dynamic and there is danger for sexual assault to occur, within the framework of "Aboriginal law", communities which have not won "title" in the courts may not be able to stop industrial growth projects which rape the earth, even if they wanted to.

In order to protect their land, the Williams decision also puts a great deal of pressure and burden on communities to go forward and fight to gain "title" in the courts, because without "title" there is no need for consent. For an Indigenous community, bringing a case forward is a burden which consumes a lot of energy, time, and money. Thus, encouraging communities to fight for title can be read as another avenue for economic stimulation.

It has been argued that the Crown often uses big business as a surrogate for meaningful consult. Though the Crown cannot legally delegate its duty to consult, it often delegates procedural aspects of consultation and so "[i]n practice, much of the obligation to consult falls to the industrial proponents" (Gibson and O'Faircheallaigh 2010:30).

However, the oppressed show resistance. History has shown that developers should also consult the local community before beginning resource extraction. If businesses fail to consult, their projects could be stalled or even eventually cancelled due to protest. An excellent example is the James Bay hydroelectric project which was eventually stopped due to protests led by Matthew Coon Come (Haluza-DeLay, O'Riley, Cole, and Agyeman 2009:1-2). As a result, businesses have begun to initiate the negotiation of Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBA) to ensure expediency (Ibid; Fidler and Hitch



2007:56), this has been the experience of Attawapiskat. In addition, the Canadian government has started to mandate the use of IBAs as part of the environmental assessment process, as well as the land claim settlement process. That IBAs have been worked into the procedural aspects of consultation has been the experience of the Innu Nation (Samson 2014:261; Gibson 2006:341)

### 3.4 Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs)

As an extension of Corporate Social Responsibility doctrine which is guided by liberalism, IBAs are not state-regulated, and thus “fall within a historically uncontested, gray area of legality, often referred to by lawyers as quasi-legal” (Caine and Krogman 2010:80). IBAs present an opportunity for corporations to boast social and environmental responsibility to the broader public while also refraining from engaging in the politics which surround Indigenous life in a colonized land. For Indigenous groups, signing an IBA signals approval for the impending project, while also an acceptance of certain restrictions on collective title and land rights (Ibid).

Hypothetically, IBAs represent a reciprocal relationship. In exchange for the use of their land, the Indigenous group expects certain economic benefits (such as jobs and/or royalties) and in return generally expresses the desire for minimal environmental damage. From a business perspective, there are many benefits to engaging in negotiations for an IBA which include solidifying a cheap labour force, good public relations practice, and establishing a relationship with the local community should the project expand further (Ibid; Fidler and Hitch 2007; Sosa and Keenan 2001). The purported benefits for Indigenous communities include ensuring that some of the revenue derived from resources on the land flows back to the local community, employment, job training, and possessing more political and social control over development in the area (Sosa and Keenan 2001). Though the process of negotiating IBAs appears to be socially responsible, it has been argued that the main motivation for businesses involved in IBAs is to ensure certainty that projects will move forward swiftly and profits will be secured (Fidler and Hitch 2007:58).

### 3.4.1 Confidentiality clauses and power

Because IBAs usually contain confidentiality clauses, access to information on past agreements is difficult for Indigenous communities to find (Sosa and Keenan 2001). However, corporations are experienced in IBA negotiations, and thus, they possess the skills and familiarity to know how to get the most out of the agreement process. Additionally, companies are often in a position to negotiate with multiple communities. In these scenarios, benefits and negative impacts are often unequally distributed because confidentiality clauses prevent communities from working together and building solidarity. Confidentiality clauses prevent neighboring communities from information sharing and communally organizing, which solidifies the corporate strategy to “divide and conquer” (Ibid: 3).

In some cases, Indigenous communities claim to have opted for confidentiality clauses as a means to prevent government agencies from accessing information regarding royalties or other economic benefits. Fear of reduced government funding is usually cited as main reason why communities “choose” confidentiality clauses (Caine and Krogman 2010:86), an opinion most surely supported if not encouraged by corporations during negotiations. However, when communities opt for a confidentiality clause they reduce their bargaining power (Ibid; Sosa and Keenan 2001). By entering into an agreement that severely limits a community’s ability to consult with experienced individuals and/or groups, communities are less likely to come to the negotiating table knowing what benefits or costs are at stake. The use of confidentiality clauses is crucial in understanding the power imbalance between Indigenous communities and corporations. Confidentiality clauses prevent communities from learning from each other’s experiences. The result is that corporations continue to negotiate the same inequitable agreements with communities all over Canada all while appearing socially and environmentally responsible.

### 3.4.2 Non-compliance clauses and power

Along with confidentiality clauses, it is common for IBAs to incorporate noncompliance clauses which prevent Indigenous groups from engaging in activity that could delay or stop development (Caine and Krogman 2010:86). In some cases, new information

surfaces during the life of the project which cause communities to want to re-negotiate the IBA. In these scenarios, noncompliance clauses prevent reopening the negotiation process to amend the IBA so that the project will continue unfettered. In the event of noncompliance provisions, community members would be breaking contract if their protests delayed or otherwise infringed project development. “Noncompliance clauses produce a situation reminiscent of indentured servants, who promise to work a certain number of many years in exchange for their freedom, no matter how bad the working conditions” (Ibid).

Reduction in government spending, loosening of environmental regulations, and little to no government involvement in negotiations has resulted in criticism “that IBAs are a form of government downloading that sees companies act as welfare providers and communities as environmental watchdogs” (Sosa and Keenan 2001:9).

In regards to resource extraction, governments and corporations use buzzwords such as “sustainability” in order to promote good public relations. However, given their finite nature alone, non-renewable resources can never be known as “sustainable,” a word which connotes continuous thriving. Moreover, when the resources that are being extracted will be used to manufacture more consumer commodities, the vision of “sustainability” becomes even more of a falsehood.

### 3.4.3 Process and Power

Negotiators and other key actors who have been involved in IBAs have published skepticism about the process of their negotiation (Caine and Krogman 2010; Fidler and Hitch 2007; Gibson and O’Faircheallaigh 2010; O’Faircheallaigh 2013; Sosa and Keenan 2001). Much of the content of these works include criticism about unbalanced relationships between the Indigenous group and the involved corporation. Namely, Caine and Krogman’s (2010) analysis of power and IBAs is helpful in deconstructing how the process of negotiation favours the company because the dynamics of power that are at play. Namely, the power relationships which characterize IBA negotiation limit the sphere of decision making to relatively non-contentious issues making sure that certain concerns are not officially addressed. Thus, the imbalance of power may influence

community members to ratify agreements which, at their core, do not reflect the values of the individual or the community. Caine and Krogman's analysis acknowledges that power is not only exercised at the negotiation table but is "extended over the entire social context in which institutions are located" (83).

As discussed in the previous chapter, Frantz Fanon (1952/2008) explains that colonialism uses cultural shaming in order to induce a sense of inferiority in the colonized person. The colonizer achieves this through various means including using patronizing language to 'talk down' to the colonized person. This strips the Indigenous person of their dignity and self-esteem which might otherwise push the Indigenous person to act more assertively when confronted with the colonizer. If the Indigenous person attempts to counteract the wishes of the dominant force, the colonial master berates her: "We educated you and now you are turning against your benefactors. Ungrateful wretches! You'll always be a disappointment" (18). Other times, the colonial master ignores these pleas as if they were never uttered, and in doing so, strips the Indigenous person of dignity by erasing their words. Chief Mark Nui of Utshimassits explains his anger as a result of being ignored during the consultation process for the Voisey's Bay nickel mine:

I am angry with the government now. When the panel came to Davis Inlet, we told them about our life at Voisey's Bay, and how the mine would affect our culture. The elders told the panel about how mining at Emish could damage the land and the animals there, and about how they are already seeing the effects of exploration activities. We told the panel that our land had to be protected. The panel listened to us, and recommended that a land rights agreement had to be settled before the mining could begin. Now the government has refused. Why does the government pretend to listen to us and then do what they want anyway? The government makes a lot of promises, but they don't live up to them (Samson 2003a:123)

Chief Nui's story is telling for a couple of reasons. Firstly, IBAs—like the one used in Voisey's Bay are usually strictly confidential, and thus there are not many recorded accounts on community experiences. However, that communities like Attawapiskat have protested confidential IBAs with public demonstrations and road blocks, validates a certain level of anger and sentiment of which communities feel, but cannot express in documented form. Further, in light of the experience of being silenced and ignored so

many times throughout the colonial process, IBAs are presented to communities as the only avenue to mitigate ecological destruction.

By the time a company is in a position to negotiate an IBA it is likely that the corporation has already invested a great deal of money to explore the land. Specifically with petroleum seismic exploration, little or no consultation with local communities is required (Caine and Krogman 2010:85). Given the rural areas where resource extraction occurs, sometimes infrastructure is built in order to facilitate exploration (Samson 2003a:99,106-107). Building roads, docks, and landing strips cause ecological destruction, but as part of the exploration phase may move forward without consultation. Once negotiations have started, there are a number of procedural hurdles for communities to overcome. As directed by the corporation, IBAs are meant to be negotiated as quickly as possible so that the company may begin their project. As a result, communities have little time to access resources such as lawyers and helpful information regarding potential damages or best practices for IBAs (Sosa and Keenan 2001:10). Given the legal framework, the government is not required to supervise, intervene, or otherwise be involved in IBA negotiations. As such, “communities are left on their own to negotiate their relationship in the global economy” (Matthews 2014: 120).

Ganesci and Pray (2008) argue that corruption plays a key factor in most resource extraction around the world. Ganesci and Pray warn that the “resource curse” which has plagued so many communities in the global South can create new inequalities where “there is vast wealth to be distributed by a relatively small number of individuals in an environment characterized by high levels of secrecy” (45). The spirit of individualism and the sudden influx of industry can also exacerbate existing inequalities. In Canada, government programming for Indigenous people largely focuses on entrepreneurship (AANDC 2013). Through resource extraction, small business owners stand to win contracts with local industry but fewer other opportunities present themselves to community members. An example is the Innu Limited Development Partnership (IDLDP) scandal. The ILDP is a “development” organization meant to act as a middleman on the behalf of the community, linking local business with large scale industry. The IDLP scandal involved the CEO taking home more than \$1million salary in two years which

was supposed to filter back into the community. The IDLP also “donated” \$25,000 to a local conservative MP’s campaign (Samson 2014:263; CBC 2012).

### 3.5 Chronic underfunding as an invitation for transnational investment

The use of IBAs as a form of Corporate Social Responsibility doctrine has serious repercussions for Indigenous communities in Canada, as responsibility for social service delivery is obscured through weak policies and underfunding. Gare Smith (2008) reminds us that when governments do not adequately provide social services for local communities, “stakeholders often look to multinationals to ‘fill the gap’ regarding worker protections, environmental standards, and respect for human rights” (3). When this happens, political accountability is usurped by corporations who are “effectively letting the state off the hook” (Ganascci and Pray 2008:48). In addition, when access to clean water is scarce, corporations can promote their voluntary actions to remedy the situation, without addressing the reality that water is often undrinkable because of corporate pollution and that this means that governments have not properly regulated environmental practice (Ibid:46). Both transnational corporations and governments are implicated in environmental harms as a consequence of industrial growth. This has resulted in some scholars calling for legal collective responsibility for both the state and multinational corporations (Seck 2011). Given the power imbued in the market-economy, it is not surprising that no legal framework exists as such.

In 2004 the average federally allotted dollar amount per each Indigenous individual in Canada was \$7,200 whereas for non-Indigenous people, the amount allotted was \$14,900 with added provincial benefits (Palmater 2011:114). As discussed in the previous chapter, chronic material poverty and barriers to essential social service delivery continue to plague Indigenous communities who are becoming increasingly responsible to remedy such things. Even though individual communities are made responsible for solving issues of social service delivery, policy regarding funding prevents groups from long-term planning. In addition to chronic underfunding and capacity issues, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern and Development Canada (AANDC) renews funding agreements on an annual basis, meaning that communities do not know how much money they will have

for projects in years to come—a fact critiqued by the Auditor General in 2011 (White et al. 2012:17). The result is that communities often cannot embark on new social service projects meant to last longer than one year. Subsequently, communities frequently find themselves in a vulnerable position; in need of funding and support while also trying to assert their ability to “self-govern” as designed by the federal administration. When multinational resource extraction companies approach these groups, the promise of an IBA may be an appealing route to solving issues of survival.

### 3.6 Government devolution and the Indigenous workforce

A federal government report entitled “Aboriginal Participation in Major Resource Development” (2012) outlines the national plan for industrial growth on traditional ancestral lands:

Responsible Resource Development is the federal government’s plan to create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity by streamlining the review process for major projects. The plan includes the introduction of legislation that will advance a system-wide approach for improved federal reviews of major resource projects. It also proposes several program measures to help build more consistent, accountable, meaningful and timely consultations with Aboriginal groups in order to help reduce the potential for delays, legal risks and uncertainty (Government of Canada 2012:12, emphasis in original).

Consistent with the IBA literature, the government’s mandate is to provide expediency and legal certainty for resource development. As such, it is no surprise that a section written about IBAs claim that they “are often linked to environmental impact assessments and environmental management” (Government of Canada 2012:15). Environmental Assessments, commonly referred to as “EAs”, must be legally conducted by the federal government under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act of 2012 (Government of Canada 2015). The report states that IBAs cannot replace an environmental assessment, but can influence the content of them (Government of Canada 2012:15). This is a strange reality as “IBAs are not considered environmental agreements, yet they have significant consequences for the environment” (Caine and Krogman 2010:78). The result is that corporations are increasingly responsible for completing government duties meant to create protections for Indigenous communities and the lands which they have occupied since time immemorial. Given government and private interest in exploiting resources on

Indigenous land, it is plausible that environmental assessments as such are largely influenced by the desire to start the extraction process, and less by the community's desires to protect the land. Further, environmental assessments and IBAs generally only account for local environmental impact and thus, are not considering the larger implications for global problems such as climate change.

According to the same report, the largest private sector employer of Indigenous people is the mining industry (Government of Canada 2012:7). Within the industry, the report states that Indigenous people primarily occupy low-level jobs which include employment as equipment operators, in transport, and in trades. The report boasts that Indigenous people who work in the mining sector earn more than double that of the average annual income for other Indigenous "Canadians", though it does not discuss the astronomically high unemployment rate which skews these numbers. However, it does confess that for those who are employed in mining, the gap has widened between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's income. In 2001 Indigenous people earned \$12,200 less than non-Indigenous people in mining, compared with a gap of \$18,000 less by 2006 (Ibid). The report also claims that "[r]elations between industry and Indigenous people and communities have evolved in recent years, with companies that undertake major resource projects recognizing the need to not just consult and engage, but to utilize Indigenous Canadians as partners" (10). It would seem that the industry involvement that is "utilizing "Aboriginal Canadians" as partners" is in actuality the utilizing of Indigenous bodies as a cheap labour force. Given that IBAs are being increasingly used in Canada, it would also seem that the supposed training, education, and equity clauses that are so often promised as part of CSR are not working to close this gap.

### 3.7 Similarities between IBAs and the numbered treaties

The imposition of capitalism and European ways of knowing came to many Indigenous communities most forcefully through the numbered treaties of the late nineteenth century. Treaties carried with them the language of "rights" which purported to allow communities the legal ability to continue sustenance living on their ancestral lands. Under laws invented and then dictated to the Indigenous people, signing treaties was a way to legally secure their way of life which "would be endangered if civilization kept



advancing” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:52). However, it has been widely documented that government officials were deceitful in their negotiations with Indigenous communities, verbally making promises that were not written into the legal documents known as the “treaties” (Frideres 2011; Whitelaw, Tsuji, and McCarthy 2010; Frideres and Gadacz 2005; Frideres 1998; Hookimaw-Witt 1998; Wotherspoon and Satzewich 1993). Specifically, there are discrepancies between what the written treaties say, and what Indigenous communities claim to have understood (Wotherspoon and Satzewich 1993:22). For example, Omushkegowuk elders of Northern Ontario claim that there were promises made to them that were not written into the legal document that became Treaty No. 9. When the Omushkegowuk signed the document they were unable to read the English text, therefore the Cree did not know that the promises made to them by treaty makers were missing (Whitelaw, Tsuji, and McCarthy 2010:95). As a result, it has been difficult for Indigenous communities to ensure that the treaties, as they understood them, are being enforced. Similarly, IBAs are presented as legal documents but in reality they are difficult to legally enforce. Specifically, without third party involvement, there are no government offices responsible for ensuring that IBA provisions are being implemented and no legal repercussions exist for targets not met (Caine and Krogman 2010:84).

As discussed in the previous chapter, systemic and widespread poverty has created many social health problems among communities which are causing psychological and social harm and often results in premature death. Given that the government has interest in opening Indigenous land to private investment, “Aboriginal poverty” is used as a strategic pivoting point from which the federal government presents industrial growth as a solution. This strategy is similar to the treaties where “the government used the situation that many Indian bands were in, threatened by starvation and disease, against the bands as they would agree to any conditions as long as they could hope for immediate relief” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:50).

The content of treaties and IBAs across great spans of geography and cultural differences is a marked similarity between the two types of legal agreements. Frideres (2011) argues that after the first formal treaties of 1850 were negotiated in Ontario, they became the template used for all other numbered treaties which includes the Northwest Territories,

northwestern Ontario, and the prairies. Frideres notes that differences between the numbered treaties remain very few, and only when the government could extract more land and benefits from Indigenous people would there be deviation from the template (12). Similarly, Caine and Krogman (2010) note that the content of IBAs “remains curiously similar”, despite the fact that reviewers have insisted on tailor-made agreements which reflect the diversity of the communities themselves (81). As discussed above, the content of IBAs usually include clauses which do not serve Indigenous groups, but rather, favour the private sector. Confidentiality clauses, non-compliance clauses, and pressure to come to agreement in shortened time periods put corporations and government at a clear advantage and are found in most IBAs.

There are other very serious problems with treaty negotiations that mirror the contemporary negotiation of Impact and Benefit Agreements. Perhaps the most obvious similarity is that both legal documents are made in attempt to free Indigenous land for foreign occupation and exploitation. During the late 1800s, Indigenous resistance to settler encroachment posed a real threat to the Canadian government, as exemplified by the Riel Resistance and the Northwest Rebellion, and this inspired government officials to seek treaties with the Indigenous people. Ultimately, the goal was to control the Indigenous population while securing access to land for settlement, resource extraction, and for the expansion of the railway system (Frideres 2011:11). Today, Indigenous resistance poses another real threat to resource extraction and other sources of economic growth. The negotiation of treaties and IBAs function as social control mechanisms which superficially acknowledge “rights” and “title” while further dispossessing the Indigenous people. In the case of treaties, the result is a shifting of dependency away from the land and onto the state. In the case of IBAs, the result is the shifting of dependency away from the state and onto the corporation. In both cases, Indigenous communities are implicated in outcomes which are not in their favour, and in which they had little control.

### 3.7.1 Indigenous resistance and “home grown” terrorism

In January 2014, a leaked RCMP document obtained by Greenpeace describes anti-petroleum protestors as “a growing, highly organized, and well financed, anti-Canadian

petroleum movement, that consists of peaceful activists, militants and violent extremists, who are opposed to society's reliance on fossil fuels" (RCMP 2015:1). The report goes on to describe protestors as "highly violent" and "criminal." Within a number of weeks, the ruling Conservative Party of Canada put forward Bill C-51 which is meant to curb "terrorism" and "terrorist activities." Under Bill C-51, "interference" with "the economic or financial stability of Canada" is considered an act of terrorism which undermines the security of the country (Parliament of Canada 2015: Part 1, Section 2a). The bill also loosens the burden of proof needed for surveillance and arrest of an individual or organization who is suspected to be engaged in "terrorist" activity (Palmer 2015). The Canadian government is using "terrorist" rhetoric to detain, and thus further prevent any groups from stalling or stopping resource extraction. Consistent with current laws and policy, as demonstrated above, if Canadian Indigenous groups do not want industrial growth on their ancestral lands, the government will step-in to ensure that projects move forward regardless. Although most technically this represents government regulation, neoliberalism is expressed here in the pursuit of free markets in which it is the private sector's 'right' to participate.

Bill C-51 also contains a number of amendments to the Criminal Code, many of which are in regards to "valuable mineral rights." These changes to the criminal code would generally make it illegal to possess non-refined minerals with the exception of the "owner" or the "owner's agent" (Parliament of Canada 2015b: Section 394). As will be demonstrated in the following chapters about the Omushkegowuk and the Innu, many Indigenous cultures in Canada do not understand the Earth or 'nature' as objects that are separate from humans. Rather, the Omushkegowuk and the Innu ways of knowing are rooted in reciprocal relationships between all sentient and non-sentient beings based on maintaining systems of reciprocity and sustainability. This philosophical approach to existence mirrors Tim Morton's theory on "Ecology without Nature" (2007). In sum, Morton argues that mainstream conceptions of "nature" identify the environment as something which is outside of ourselves, or something that is "over there." In order to move through catastrophic problems such as climate change, we must begin to understand ecology as encompassing all elements of Earth and the universe, and that includes humans (Ibid:2009). "Ecology without nature" then, refers to acknowledging

human responsibility for ecological destruction, a phenomenon which has occurred exponentially since the industrial revolution and the acceleration of the capitalist system. As such, it is a perverse act to legally declare that fossilized or liquefied elements of the Earth legally belong to any one person or group, endowing them with the “right” to exploit the ecological system in which those elements are embedded, whether that group be a transnational corporation or an Indigenous community.

### 3.8 In Sum

While appearing to share power equally, negotiations between Indigenous communities and the dominant institutions of our time place communities at a severe power disadvantage. The legal atmosphere in Canada dissects ecological relationships which have existed for thousands of years into neoliberal concepts such as “rights,” “ownership,” and “entitlement”. Systemic poverty and social health problems which linger as a result of ongoing colonialism are used by the government to legitimate corporate penetration and expropriation of entire ecological systems which include humans. As Indigenous communities are further dispossessed of the lands and practices with which they have been engaged since time immemorial, corporations and governments project themselves as generous heroes who are solving the public issue of Indigenous material poverty.

Meanwhile, the federal government is increasingly devolving responsibilities onto Indigenous communities as well as onto corporations in an attempt to streamline bureaucratic barriers to economic growth. The result is the encouragement of private contracts, known as Impact and Benefit Agreements, negotiated between corporations and individual communities which are difficult to legally enforce. IBAs are presented to the public as a form of corporate social responsibility, but they function mainly as a form of social control, similar to that of the numbered treaties of the late nineteenth century. The end result is that Indigenous communities are implicated in negative outcomes over which they had little control. In line with federal policies which have attempted to force capitalist ideology onto Indigenous people since colonial invasion, current resource development initiatives seek to create a system of dependency whereby Indigenous

people cannot participate in traditional subsistence living and must rely on corporate investment for survival.

## Chapter 4

### 4 The people of Attawapiskat and their relationship with the Victor diamond mine

At the end of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution was drastically changing production and commodity consumption in Europe and elsewhere. The fur trade in Canada which had thrived for more than one hundred years had begun to dwindle as animal populations dropped to dangerously low levels, and new, cheaper products were being used to make fashionable clothing in Europe. Specifically, silk had replaced beaver fur in the making of hats, and “fancy furs” had replaced Canadian beaver and rabbit in the making of other stylish personal items such as coats (Innis 1962:341).

Meanwhile, the new independent state of Canada was struggling to define its borders and establish a reliable economy. The federal government wanted to expand its territorial boundaries in order to open up land for immigrant settlers, expand the railway system, and to accelerate the exploitation of natural resources. Knowing that Indigenous people occupied the land, a plan needed to be devised to extinguish them, or otherwise control those whom they perceived to be a “threat” to the Canadian annexation of indigenous territory (Frideres 2011:11; Frideres 1998:51-52). The plan, as such, would be for the government to impose treaties on those Indigenous people who survived colonization. Through the treaties, the government effectively robbed the Indigenous people of the land which they had occupied since time immemorial, and then confined them to small spaces known as “reserves” (Ibid 2011:11). The first formal treaties were signed in Ontario, and then were used as templates for the “numbered treaties” which spanned westward from Northern Ontario to the Northwest Territories (Ibid 1998:12).

The treaty making process in Northern Ontario deviated somewhat from the templates created by the earlier numbered treaties. First, difficult living conditions created by the invading population made survival in the Northern regions of Canada more difficult, and this pushed the Indigenous people to approach the government for treaty negotiations. Imported diseases spread through Indigenous populations who had not yet built up immunity, and the construction of the railway system ruined trap lines and threatened

species used by local people for survival (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:33; Morrison 1986:1-2). In short, people were starving and sick and wanted to secure their way of living before “civilization” forever destroyed their way of existence.

At the same time, mineral deposits were discovered in the Northern regions of what is now called “Canada” and this provided the impetus for negotiations from the federal and provincial governments (Frideres 1998:52). By the turn of the century, the provincial boundaries of Ontario had already been established and this led to the federal and provincial governments collaborating to create what is now generally referred to as “Treaty No. 9,” the first and only treaty that involved a province (AANDC 2010a; Hookimaw-Witt 1998:31). Despite that Chief Louis Espagnol, whose original name was Sahquakegick, had initiated the treaty-making process (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:33; Morrison 1986:1), the creation of Treaty No. 9 was not a negotiation. Rather, it was “determined by the Ontario and Canadian governments well in advance of discussions with Aboriginals” (Frideres 2011:48). Further, the governments offered less than they had in previous treaties, having taken advantage of the desperate condition that the people of this region were experiencing (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:32). The ultimate goal for the federal and provincial governments was to extinguish Indigenous title to the land (Ibid:35).

Treaty No. 9 was signed in 1905-1906 (AANDC 2010a), and allowed the Canadian government, by its own laws, to “legally” expel the Indigenous people off the land which they had been occupying since time immemorial. When the treaty was signed, the biggest concern expressed by the Indigenous groups was the preservation of their ability to hunt, gather subsistence foods, and continue their ancestral ways of living (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:41). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there were promises made to the Cree that were not present in the “legal” document that became Treaty No. 9, and signatories could not read the English text (McCarthy, Whitelaw, and Tsuji 2010:95). Over and over, the people were assured that as long as they were “good subjects of the king” they would possess the “rights” to their traditional activities on “the land.” The definition of how to be a “good subject of the king” is best exemplified in the directions given to the people who met at the HBC post at Fort Hope:

...that by signing the treaty they pledged themselves not to interfere with white men who might come into the country surveying, prospecting, hunting or in other occupations: they must respect the laws of the land in every particular, and that their reserves were set apart for them in order that they might have a tract in which they could not be molested (Canada 1905-1906, quoted in Hookimaw-Witt 1998:41-42).

In extinguishing Indigenous title to the land, the governments were creating legal space, as defined by their own laws, to develop the land as they saw fit. According to the dominant governments, any land that existed north of Fort Albany in Ontario was considered a part of Treaty No. 9 (Ibid: 43). However, by the 1920s, Ottawa began hearing about Indigenous people North of Fort Albany making claims of unceded land. The federal government reacted swiftly, and by 1930, Treaty No. 9 had been amended, with land set aside for eight new reserves, one of which was Attawapiskat (Ibid:45). Even with the reserve set aside, most band members continued to live their nomadic lives in the bush until the 1960s. Some band members continue to live in the traditional way, having never settled in Attawapiskat permanently (Hookimaw-Witt 1998; Witt 1998).

## 4.1 The Omushkegowuk

Jacqueline Hookimaw-Witt is an Inninew Esquew (Cree woman) from Attawapiskat, an Omushkegowuk (Swampy Cree) community (Hookimaw-Witt 2010) in Northern Ontario. Dr. Hookimaw-Witt, along with her husband, Dr. Norbert Witt, have conducted numerous interviews with elders from Attawapiskat, documenting oral histories and accounts of the Inninew culture and worldview. It is largely from these bodies of work that I report on how the Cree people of Attawapiskat understand and explain their cultural collective identity. I do not believe that it is possible to capture thousands of years of culture in a few paragraphs, however, in the following section I hope to provide a glimpse into how the Inninew of Attawapiskat interpret their cultural existence as rooted in the surrounding ecological system.

According to local legend, the people of Attawapiskat have occupied a large area near what is known as the Hudson Bay since time immemorial, “which is interpreted by science as the time since the ice retreated from the Hudson Bay lowland,” approximately 5,000 years ago (Hookimaw-Witt 2010:21). Indeed, it is difficult to define identity, let



alone to pinpoint a collective worldview. However, the Inninew have a word to describe their way of existence: Pimaatisiwin, which roughly translates to “the good life”. As Hookimaw-Witt explains:

[L]ife is Pimaatisiwin, the good life, a holistic concept of life which includes everything imaginable in life and some of the concepts I was talking about like knowledge, spirituality, objectivity, and even science. Pimaatisiwin also includes respect for ‘the other’ which gives the concept of sharing a double dimension, meaning that I not only share my knowledge and philosophy but I am also open to accept what other people share with me (Ibid:26).

According to Dr. Hookimaw-Witt (1998), Pimaatisiwin is a concept that is not easily understood by the analytical mind, especially because it incorporates the emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual interpretation of existence (25-26). Descriptions of Pimaatisiwin presented in all of Hookimaw-Witt’s interviews (Ibid: 97) and were observed to be embedded in “the creation” which might commonly be understood as “the land.” This is perhaps best exemplified by David Tookate’s statement about changes after moving to the reserve:

Yes, there had been many changes. There seems to be an epidemical increase of social problems. It was not like that before. Life was harmonious and calm in those better times. Then the land surveyors came to look for a place to put us into to take care of us. That was all. This should not be called reserve land, only the land where DIA can look after us. The Chief and Council work like the white government. What would be if that was not the case? As you see, we are starting to pay for everything. My life consisted of traditional activities. When I am in the house I can just breathe. I cannot see the creation (Ibid:98).

As such, it is not enough to claim that the people of Attawapiskat have a close relationship with the land. Rather, the Inninew understand the environment as a part of their identity, not as a thing which is separate from the human body. This sentiment is exemplified through an interview with the former deputy chief: “That is my home, the water, the birds, the animals. That is part of me. That is my identity” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:101). This sentiment is supported by a different interview with Patrick Metat where it is stated that, “[l]and is precious, rich and very important. Without the land we will die” (Ibid: 97).

Pimaatisiwin includes a responsibility for maintaining the sustainability of creation through respect for all things, including “plants, animals, minerals, and all elements” (Ibid:101). Many interviews confirm this sentiment, where elders express the importance of not depleting nature’s resources, such as David Tookate, who expresses that “[w]e should be responsible for the land we live on. We must show respect for Creation, and we have to continue to pass it on to our future generations” (Ibid:100). All Inninew values are passed on through the generations, but are learned through observations in nature, as explained by a local teacher, who tells of learning from the cedar tree, the wolf, and the river (Ibid:108). Hookimaw-Witt concludes by stating that “[o]ur whole existence can be explained by the land” (Ibid:108).

It is through such a life experience that Jacqueline Hookimaw-Witt argues in her Master’s thesis (1998) that it is not possible for the Inninew to have “surrendered” their land in signing Treaty No. 9, because the Cree are the land. Such a statement is supported by Shano Fireman’s reflection on land ownership: “You cannot own land. This is all a man made law. Kitche Mando did not give the land to any one person. Wars and laws are man made. Land comes from Kitche Mando. We cannot own it or give it away. We have to honour it.” (Ibid: 190). Reflecting on what he had learned from the people of Attawapiskat, Witt (1998) summarizes this concept well:

The relations of Native people to the land are that land is their life. It is their identity. The land is as much part of the people as the people are part of the land. Everything that is contained in life like spirituality, culture, and identity, survival and responsibility is contained in the people’s relationship to the land. Land and the people are inseparable (187).

Before the creation of Attawapiskat, elders explain that there was very little conflict between the people. In response to Hookimaw-Witt’s question about traditional social relations, James Carpenter explains that: “On the land you live a strong and healthy life. We live a humble life and people care for each other.” David Tookate supports this claim by saying: “The land teaches calmness and harmony with relations to plants, trees, etc. We used to share food and have respect for everything on the land.” And Patrick Metat reinforces such statements by noting that: “People used to be in harmony with each other. We greeted each other and helped each other a lot” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:189).

Despite every attempt to extinguish their cultural worldview, the Omushkegowuk have maintained much of the belief systems that make them a distinct culture. The continuity of Inninew identity is exemplified by the fact that in 2001, nearly 100% of the Indigenous population of Attawapiskat spoke Cree as their first language (Statistics Canada 2001). In addition, there are a small number of band members who continue to live a traditional existence in the bush, having never settled permanently into a sedentary life on the reserve (Hookimaw-Witt 1998; Witt 1998). Despite every attempt by the federal government and the church to suffocate “Indian” culture, Inninew worldview is alive and expressed by many of the residents of Attawapiskat. However, pain and suffering as a result of colonially induced intergenerational trauma is a tragic reality for those living on the Attawapiskat reserve.

## 4.2 Colonial trauma

### 4.2.1 Religion and capitalist ideology

The treaty-making process was not the first “civilizing” mission of the Canadian bourgeois in Indian country, rather, treaties were one of a pastiche of tools for social control at the time. In the mid-nineteenth century, Catholic missionaries began to explore the region of the Hudson Bay and the Attawapiskat River, visiting local Indigenous people and families who were camping on their winter trap lines. By 1893, the missionaries built a church on the shores of the river and by 1901 the Hudson Bay had established a trading post where the church was located (Obomsawin 2012). It is the simultaneous formation of these institutions that have led some authors to claim that “Catholic priests founded Attawapiskat in 1893” (Halfe 2014:46), after the missionaries built a physical location for the trade of spiritual and material currency. It is through the “civilizing” missions of this time that we are able to understand the link between religion and economics.

Before the missionaries came to spread the word of a Christian God, the Omushkegowuk already possessed a strong sense of “spirituality” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:99). Witt explains that when the missionaries arrived, the Inninew blended the two worldviews, accepting Christianity, while maintaining their original spirituality (1998:95). In modern

times, nearly everyone in Attawapiskat is Christian, either Catholic or Pentecostal (Witt and Hookimaw-Witt 2003:382), and the result is that when elders speak of spirituality and responsibility to the land, terms such as: “the Creator,” “Kitche Mando,” and “God” are used interchangeably. It would seem from the interviews with elders that the Inninew already possessed a monotheistic worldview, as exemplified by statements which allude to the Creator/Kitche Mando/God having created the Universe to be used fairly and equally by all beings (For some examples, see: Hookimaw-Witt 1998: 145,147,148,153). That the Inninew possessed a belief in a singular Creator, likely made the spread of Christianity easier. However, the spiritual worldview of the Inninew was very different from the formal organization and institutional structure of the Catholic Church. As Mary Wabano expresses:

Our forefathers prayed a lot, even before the man in the black long dress came. There were medicine men that used their powers in good ways, and sometimes also in bad ways. The good shamans were like doctors and they could cure people that were sick. Our grandfathers had drums when they prayed a lot. Nevertheless St. Xavier wrote in the Great Book that our ways were mandocheo (satanic) and that our people did not know Kitche Mando. The use of traditional rituals was said to be pagan in the book. We had a priest who used to meet the community regularly to talk to the people and to advice [sic] them, when the children had to be home. From then on, the kids were whipped when they did not listen (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:177).

In order to annex the land upon which Indigenous people depended for their spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being, the bourgeois class—who at the time consisted largely of government and religious officials—had to replace the object/subject of Indigenous dependence. In introducing formalized religion, and the “laws” bestowed in the Indian Act, the bourgeois sought to trade traditional interpretations of the universe, for values and beliefs bestowed in Christianity and capitalism. This new system of dependence introduced rigid laws, institutional permanence, rationalized social hierarchy, wealth accumulation, enterprise, and predictability (Novak 2000:8). As Fanon reminds us, the colonizing bourgeoisie are aided by formal religion, which teaches populations to emulate “saints who turned the other cheek, who forgave those who trespassed against them, [and] who, without flinching, were spat upon and insulted” (1963/2004:28). Through the adoption of Christianity, the Inninew would be pacified while they were

dehumanized and separated from the land where their identities are embedded. These social control mechanisms had been influencing the people who lived north of Fort Albany since the time that the church was built, nearly forty years before Treaty No. 9 was amended to create the reserve now known as Attawapiskat.

Once Treaty No.9 was amended in 1930, the Attawapiskat reserve was created where the church and the HBC trading post was located. Slowly, houses were built to accommodate the local priest, nuns, and the manager of the local Hudson Bay trading post. Eventually, Inninew families began to spend increasingly more time on the reserve (Honigmann 1957). And in time, some log cabins were built for the “Indians”, replacing the traditional teepee or wigwam (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:34), lending a sense of permanence to living on the reserve. An important thing to consider here is that until the reserve was created, most families lived on their own in the bush, not in big collectives or “bands”. The people belonged to the land, and other than family, that was their main unit of identity (Ibid:112). This is contrasted by the Eurocentric worldview that the land belongs to the people.

Based on the belief that people can “own” title to land, the governments needed to assure that they had properly extinguished any such ownership from the Indigenous people. In order to make it faster and easier to extinguish Inninew title over the land, the “negotiators” had to create a group of people whom they could convince to sign the treaty. “Instead of visiting the people living on the land, the negotiator went to the Hudson’s Bay Trading Posts, and the people trading there were considered a ‘band’” (Hookimaw-Witt 1998: 112-113). The concept of “band membership” is a Euro-Canadian creation (Ibid:112) which extends back to the Indian Act—a document which homogenizes and controls “who” is legally allowed to be considered an “Indian”.

Around the time that Inninew families were moving to Attawapiskat, land “development” by the invaders had killed much of the game of the area. Families were forced to seek assistance from the government due to food shortage, and government assistance came in the form of money (Honigmann 1957:366). Money and furs were traded for imported food stuffs such as wheat and bacon that were available at the trading post (Hookimaw-

Witt 1998:34). HBC also introduced alcohol through the trading post at the time (Ibid: 173). This dietary change had detrimental effects on the physical and spiritual health of the people as it was foreign to their bodies and was spiritually detached from traditional understanding of relationships to the universe (Mosby 2013). The slow integration of the Inninew into European ideology resulted in a new system of dependence, away from the land and toward capitalism, as witnessed by anthropologist John Honigmann, whose fieldwork in Attawapiskat during the years 1947 and 1948:

In overwhelming part the Indians are economically as dependent on the outside society for food as for clothing, tents, lumber, traps, and weapons. In exchange for these goods they offer furs. But the fur resources of the area became largely exhausted shortly after the turn of the century and restocking the streams with beaver has not been highly successful (1957:366).

Once furs were depleted, the Inninew became dependent on what Honigmann calls “generous government relief” for survival (Ibid).

#### 4.2.2 The dehumanization of the Omushkegowuk: “Indians” as objects of scientific inquiry

In order to better control the “Indian”, the invaders needed to better understand “it”. After the signing of Treaty No. 9, the trading post that became Attawapiskat was used extensively as a place of social experimentation. In 1947/1948, the Canadian government sponsored a large-scale research project, known as the James Bay Survey, which included a dentist, a photographer, three anthropologists, and six physicians (Mosby 2013:153). One of the anthropologists was John Honigmann (Ibid:156), whose research was meant to interrogate the “ideology” of the Omushkegowuk (Honigmann 1957). Honigmann found that the Omushkegowuk had become dependent on the government for survival but still maintained clear ideological differences from their Euro-Canadian counterparts who regarded the Inninew as “lazy” and “stupid” (369). Specifically, the Omushkegowuk did not value the full exploitation of resources, did not place importance on private property as a reflection of the ego, and did not seek power as an expression of leadership (Ibid).

The James Bay Survey also included nutritional experiments which were meant to elucidate the health and nutritional effects of state dependency (Mosby 2013:154). The

O mushkegowuk of Attawapiskat were chosen because of their “pronounced dependence on relief” and because of their lack of material wealth (Ibid). The results showed that dependence on store-bought foods had created severe malnutrition and the onset of new diseases such as tuberculosis (Ibid:155). In an attempt to force “healthier” choices onto the Inninew, the James Bay Survey physicians experimented with families, limiting the items that they were “allowed” to purchase at the trading post (Ibid:157), and insisting that food be given to children only (Honigmann 1957:369). These experiments caused further starvation (Mosby 2013:157). The physicians concluded that in order to restore health, the “Indians” would have to become “educated” (Ibid:158).

#### 4.2.3 Promises of “education”

Until the 1960s, most Inninew families continued to live a somewhat nomadic lifestyle, interacting with the Attawapiskat reserve seasonally for government relief. During this time, the church operated a school in Attawapiskat during the summer months only and students were sent to residential school in Fort Albany for full-time “education”.

However, in 1974 a permanent school was built in Attawapiskat by the Department of Indian Affairs, requiring that families remain in Attawapiskat over the traditional hunting season. Many elders report that they decided to move to Attawapiskat permanently because of the promise of education and housing (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:139-145).

As is famously stated, the goal of education for “Indians” was to eradicate or “kill” the Indian in the child. In order for the colonizer to seize and maintain power over the surviving Indigenous population, the authorities needed to create and then reinforce their status as inferior beings. The colonial masters reminded the “Indians” of their inferior status by creating an institution which simultaneously shamed their traditional culture, while symbolically offering a way out of inferiority through learning how to be “civilized” like the colonizer. Feelings of inferiority, and a desire to be accepted by the colonial master then sway people’s willingness to participate in colonial institutions such as formalized education. Being “educated” meant learning how to engage in capitalist modes of production, and if taken far enough, could lead to enfranchisement—meaning the declassification of “Indian status” (Frideres 2011:26). This system offered little room for resistance. If families fought the “opportunity” to send their children to school, they

were cut-off from the government financial aid needed to purchase food and other means of survival (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:172). Thus, families were lured to the Attawapiskat reserve in order to participate in the education system. The promise of “education” created a need for sedentarism, and with the building of a school came promises for more permanent housing development (Hookimaw-Witt 1998:118-119).

#### 4.2.4 The effects of sedentarism

Lured by promises of housing and “education”, most of the elders interviewed by Jacqueline Hookimaw-Witt recount moving to Attawapiskat permanently during the late 1960s and 1970s (1998). Since that time, the community has been plagued by increasing social health problems such as alcoholism, solvent abuse, violence, and suicide. This is consistent with Frantz Fanon’s beliefs about the psychosomatic disorders of colonialism (1963/2004). In sum, Fanon taught that colonized people internalize feelings of inferiority which are imposed on them by the colonizer. As a result, the colonized person is left feeling very sensitive, even vulnerable, and seeks to make these feelings go away. However, the colonized person is taught to remain in her inferior place, to not overstep boundaries with the dominant power. As a result, the colonized subject projects aggression onto other colonized people and onto herself, thereby fulfilling the colonial stereotype of the inferior being. One of the many ways that self-harm manifests in Attawapiskat is through sniffing gas and suicide.

In his PhD dissertation, Norbert Witt explored the cultural basis for healing solvent abuse (1998). Witt explains that solvent abuse began to infect the youths of Attawapiskat during the 1980s (15), only a few years after the permanent school was built there. At the time of his dissertation, solvent abuse in the James Bay region (Treaty No. 9) had gained national attention as numbers of youth suicides skyrocketed (Witt 1998:15-16). The federal government reacted by granting \$1.8 million for a youth treatment centre (Phelan 1995). The treatment centre would be “a land based camp outside the community where the youths had the opportunity to build up their self-esteem by learning traditional survival skills taught by their elders” (Witt 1998:17). The premise for a land-based healing centre was based on the failure of other solvent abuse programs where the youths of Attawapiskat were sent prior to the bush camp. Witt explains that until the land-based



healing centre was built, youths from Attawapiskat were sent away to treatment centres in metropolitan centres whose success rate remained 0% (Ibid:16).

The low success rate of metropolitan treatment centres is attributed to “loneliness, language and cultural differences, culture shock, distance from home, and inability to function in a white society” (16). Similarly, the elders in the community attributed the problem of solvent abuse to disconnections from the land and traditional culture. As one elder articulates:

We were always adopting white men’s way, but this doesn’t work. You cannot be half white and half Indian. There is no faith in ourselves anymore. People are always doing as the white man does, but we cannot do that (Witt 1998:113).

Once families moved to the reserve, parents began increasingly to engage in heavy drinking, distancing themselves emotionally and physically from their children. At the same time, the school taught only the “White man’s ways”, and Elders explain that this devalues traditional culture—creating a chasm between the generations (Ibid:114). Children do not know how to connect with older generations, and parents do not know how to take care of their children, the result as explained by elders, is neglect (Ibid:114).

To add to the onslaught of problems created by the school, it was discovered in the 1990s that over the course of two decades, more than 150,000 litres of diesel fuel leaked into the building’s substructure (Kevil 2011). For decades the staff and students complained of headaches and dizziness until finally the building was demolished in 2009. Schooling continued in temporary portables until the late summer of 2014 when a new building was erected (CBC 2014).

Between the school and exposure to popular culture through television, the children of Attawapiskat are increasingly using material poverty as an excuse to sniff gas (Witt 1998:121). Elders explain that the only way to bring healing to their community is through introducing programs which highlight responsibility and purpose as rooted in the land. Witt summarizes this sentiment:

Responsibility lies within the purpose of life, to complete the circle and to keep it going. Land has to be protected to enable future generations to still be able to live

the way of life that was given to the people by the Creator. When a person has experienced life on the land, having depended on the land for survival, s/he will understand this responsibility. There have to be no tasks given to any person other than the responsibility to the land that was given by the Creator, once the person is educated in a traditional Native way. This responsibility for the land gives the individual a purpose for living and fulfillment of this responsibility will give the individual self-esteem. What is needed for that is reconnection to culture and the land. This makes the land so important in a healing program (187).

At the same time that the school was being poisoned and a solvent abuse treatment centre was being built using traditional knowledge, diamond bearing kimberlite was discovered by prospectors on Omushkegowuk traditional territory.

### 4.3 Diamonds!

Consistent with the literature on “Aboriginal law” and land development policy, exploration and plans for diamond mining were well underway before the Indigenous population was officially approached for “consultation” (Witt and Hookimaw-Witt 2003: 362). In 1987, boulders containing diamond kimberlite were discovered along the Attawapiskat River. Drilling began two years later, by 2000/2001, extensive exploration was carried out and in 2003 it was determined that building a diamond mine would be a profitable endeavor (McCarthy et al. 2010:84). It was not until this time that the Omushkegowuk population was approached regarding the “development” of their land. Attawapiskat First Nation is the closest reserve to what would become the Victor Diamond mine, owned and operated by De Beers Group of Companies.

#### 4.3.1 De Beers Group of Companies

De Beers is a transnational corporation whose headquarters are located in South Africa. Olsson aptly summarizes the company’s history:

De Beers’ geographical power base has always been South Africa. Founded by the notorious Cecil Rhodes, the firm gradually took control of mine after mine in the booming diamond industry of the late nineteenth century. In 1888, Rhodes managed to merge his own firm De Beers Mines with the firm controlling the nearby and enormously rich Kimberley mine and formed De Beers Consolidated Mines. With this move, Rhodes controlled 90 per cent of world production (2006:1146).

Since this time, De Beers has maintained a near-monopoly on diamond production, controlling the supply and the price of diamonds (Ibid; Smillie 2000; Cross 2011).

In the 1990s, diamond mining became synonymous with funding rebels and terrorists in African countries, causing civil wars, and promoting illegal smuggling and child soldiers. As the entity which is responsible for most of the world's diamond trade, such activity earned De Beers a reputation of being a supplier of "blood diamonds," also known as "conflict diamonds". This reality is contrasted by Western notions of diamonds as a "girl's best friend," as symbols of eternal love, extreme wealth, and endurance (Olsson 2006:33). In order to boost public relations after global attention to "blood diamonds," De Beers began two voluntary, self-regulating programs meant to boost perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The first of the two self-regulating campaigns was backed by the UN, called the "Kimberly Process Certification Scheme" which was meant to guarantee the origin of all diamonds as being from conflict-free zones (Cross 2011:34). The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme can be understood as a form of "bluwashing" as discussed in chapter three of this thesis.

De Beers is a vertically integrated company, meaning that it not only owns and operates most of the diamond mines in the world, but it also owns and operates most of the companies responsible for cutting, polishing, and then selling diamonds. The second voluntary CSR operation taken on by De Beers was the "Best Practices Principles" (BPP) program, which aimed to apply rules for "best practices" to be implemented in the corporation's subsidiary companies (Cross 2011:34). Cross (2011), an anthropologist, studied the BPP program's implementation in India and explains that it is nothing more than "corporate ethicizing," creating a longer bureaucratic chain and further entrenching the corporate attitude of detachment. This corporate attitude of detachment combined with the convenience of diamonds discovered in the "conflict-free" country of Canada to create what is now known as the Victor Diamond Mine in Omushkegowuk territory.

#### 4.3.2 The Victor diamond mine

The Inninew who live near the James Bay were a nomadic people until the creation of reserves through missionaries and the federal government. Families settled on these

reserves for different reasons, but traditionally they lived and hunted all over the region. That “bands” are a Euro-Canadian creation is important in understanding how social hierarchies are formed by the power elite so as to manipulate local decision making. Attawapiskat is represented by the Mushkegowuk Council, which consists of eight other reserves in Treaty No.9 region (Mushkegowuk Council 2015). In the design of the Victor mine, De Beers insisted that Attawapiskat be given priority treatment in consultation and involvement with the project. The company asserted that “a clear distinction be made between Attawapiskat and the other west coast James Bay area First Nations, namely Albany, Kashechewan and Moose Cree First Nation” (McCarthy et al. 2010:98-99). Despite that people who live in the above reserves have traditionally shared the land, the company insisted on a “divide and conquer” strategy typical of the industry, as discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis. Further, as a public relations tactic, involving Attawapiskat allowed De Beers a chance to appear socially responsible, a label that had been disassociated with the industry because of “blood diamonds”.

The imposition of Euro-Canadian bureaucratic government structures is problematic in the creation of social hierarchies both on and between reserves. The federally constructed “government” that is represented by a singular “chief” and “band council,” is exploited by the power elite to curtail decision making in favour of industrial growth. This procedure is obvious in the Environmental Assessment (EA) process, which is increasingly becoming linked to the consultation process. As “co-managers” in the EA process, band councils are forced to operate within a set of legal and linguistic structures which often conflict with cultural interpretations of “the environment”. Specifically, the language used in the EA process forces council members to learn and use the language of science and business in discussions about philosophy and traditional interpretations of the universe. Councils must subsequently begin to adopt the language of “wildlife biology” and begin “to think about animals as ‘numbers’ and the land as ‘property’” (McCarthy et al. 2010:97). The result is that band councils often make decisions which do not reflect collective cultural beliefs held by the majority of Indigenous people in the area. Instead, decisions reflect the desires of the power elite. For example, Clara Tomagatik explains that the Victor Mine has been built on her family’s traditional winter camp. Clara and her family would travel to the campsite every

fall until De Beers put up a “No Trespassing” sign. “Now, the Tomagatik family is prohibited from hunting, trapping, or camping on their traditional lands. Community members can't visit the mine site without a criminal-record check and an escort” (Keevil 2011).

As discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, negotiations for large-scale industrial growth projects often employ a divide and conquer strategy between communities. Giving preference to one community means reaching an agreement faster, and affords the ability to make promises to one group and not others. When the divide and conquer strategy is employed, communities are posited in competition with each other for resources that are not spread evenly. De Beers set up a hierarchical system which placed Attawapiskat in a position of preference over other reserves. During the EA process, Attawapiskat was consulted much more frequently than other Mushkegowuk reserves which are said to have been “largely excluded” (McCarthy et al. 2010:101). The result is that the EA “only addressed Attawapiskat First Nations’ interests and concerns; thus, the federal government’s responsible authorities failed to ensure all First Nations interests were addressed” (McCarthy et al. 2010:101). This is exemplified by a council member from Fort Albany who attempted to intervene on the behalf of the Mushkegowuk Council, and was told by Attawapiskat First Nation “not to get involved” (Ibid:100)

In Attawapiskat, it has been reported that band council members based their decisions mostly on the expected “benefits” from the mine, ignoring the input and environmental concerns of hunters, trappers, and other band members who continue to rely on the land for subsistence (Witt and Hookimaw-Witt 2003:371). Women were also almost entirely excluded from the process (Hookimaw-Witt 2010:1). Insufficient consultation with band members is present in the negotiating process between De Beers and the Attawapiskat band council. For example, the Attawapiskat band council and their lawyer signed an agreement for a winter project on the land, after only showing 30 band members the agreement. Typically, any decision regarding the land is made collectively (Witt and Hookimaw-Witt 2003:371). In addition, the council member who was responsible for “economic development” (commonly known as the “economic development officer”) was vocally against the idea of performing a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

study because the lawyer told him that they did not have to (ibid). Witt and Hookimaw-Witt (2003) explain that this behaviour is typical for small communities who are approached by transnational corporations for resource development. Specifically, local elites often become humble devotees to the company, receiving services and favours from the corporation, and in turn undermining collective decision making, cultural traditions and social structure (Oxfam America 2002, cited in Witt and Hookimaw-Witt 2003:371).

That band members of Attawapiskat and other reserves were unsatisfied with the public consultation process (McCarthy et al. 2010:104), did not prevent the mining project from moving forward. The consultation sought by De Beers met the Canadian legal standards at the time which allowed the project to move forward. De Beers later sought out a confidential Impact and Benefit Agreement (IBA) with Attawapiskat which was signed in November of 2005. Construction for the mine started that same year, and by 2008 the Victor Diamond Mine had begun commercial production (De Beers 2013a). Subsequent, and separate IBAs with other Mushkegowuk councils were later sought by De Beers who likely wanted to prevent protests or other demonstrations which would slow production. In 2007 an IBA was reached between the corporation and Moose Factory, and in 2009 an IBA was reached with the Fort Albany and Kashechewan First Nations (De Beers 2013b).

#### 4.4 Diamonds and ecological destruction

Although mines have a limited lifespan, their impact on the ecosystems where they operate can have detrimental effects for hundreds of years. Environmental damage is present at all stages of mining, including exploration and remediation long after the mine is closed (Burkhardt, Rosenbluth, and Boan N.d.:4). Since the Victor mine opened, communities and the ecosystems in which they are embedded have experienced negative consequences of industrial growth. Getting help to alleviate the ecological burden near the mine is difficult as the weight of responsibility is blurred between the federal government, the corporation, and the communities themselves. I use the following examples to demonstrate:

#### 4.4.1 Flooding and the housing crisis

Shortly after construction began, De Beers dumped the sewage from their construction site into the Attawapiskat pumping station, causing a large-scale sewage backup that leaked into the basements of many homes on the reserve (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network [APTN] 2011). The sewage backup forced many people to evacuate their homes and crowd together with other families. Once evacuated, many homes were contaminated by mold and sewage and are now uninhabitable. Engineers for the Ontario First Nations Technical Services released a report which claims that “[t]he condition of the pump control panel is very poor. There is a key switch to control manual selection of the pumps. It is very difficult to operate and may fail at any time.” Although the federal government was informed of this, they did little to fix the problem, and in 2009 the pump failed again causing more people to evacuate (Ibid). During the same year, De Beers “donated” used construction trailers to be used as emergency shelter for people who had nowhere else to live (Toronto Star 2013; Obomsawin 2012). Given that the trailers were not created for long-term housing, eventually they became moldy and fell into disrepair. Still, people continue to live in them. Many families were crowded together in shacks, without running water or heat. In 2011, Chief Theresa Spence declared a state of emergency, which led her to engage in a six-week long hunger strike because of the housing crisis and unmet treaty obligations (CBC 2013b). Tragically, in November 2013 a fire caused by a candle during a power-outage damaged one of the construction trailers, leaving approximately 80 more community members without shelter (Attawapiskat First Nation 2013).

Earlier in 2013, both Attawapiskat and Kashechewan flooded with sewage again, and both bands declared states of emergency (CBC 2013c). The CBC reported that this time in Kashechewan, 40 homes were flooded with sewage, leaving 200 people in need of a place to live. The drinking water was contaminated, leaving the community on a boil-water advisory, and the school was shut down. In Attawapiskat, along with many residents being forced to leave their homes, the hospital was evacuated due to sewage. Given their remote locations, people had to be flown out of the community as houses

were already overcrowded and patients from the hospital were in need of care (Ibid). Flooding is needed in order to develop a mine in wetlands.

#### 4.4.2 Don't eat the fish!

The ecosystem where the Victor Diamond Mine operates is one of the world's largest and most pristine wetlands (McCarthy et al. 2010:84). In order to operate a diamond mine in such an ecosystem, the land must be de-watered. De-watering methods used by De Beers have flooded areas that contain high levels of methyl mercury. Recently, higher than normal levels of methyl mercury were discovered in fish from the Albany and Attawapiskat rivers, causing the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to limit its consumption advisory to four meals per month (Burkhardt, Rosenbluth, and Boan N.d:15).

Measuring the toxicity of fish is the same way that mercury poisoning was discovered in Grassy Narrows First Nation (Shkilnyk 1985:183). Methyl Mercury is a type of Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP), as discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. Like all POPs, mercury builds in the fatty tissues of animals, and its concentration grows as it passes up the food chain. Mercury is severely toxic; it is carried by the blood and settles in the liver, kidneys, heart, and intestines. Concentration of mercury in the body causes serious damage to the central nervous system and in severe cases, irreversible brain damage (Burkhardt, Rosenbluth, and Boan N.d.:15). Mercury poisoning in humans is difficult to diagnose because the symptoms are also simulated by severe malnutrition, alcoholism, and diabetes (Shkilnyk 1985:185)—all health problems that are endemic in Treaty No. 9 region, and symptoms of the psychosomatic disorders of colonized people generally. These symptoms, which include speech disorders, loss of balance, loss of memory, and emotional instability, can accumulate without being detected. If left undetected, mercury poisoning can lead to severe disability and even death. Pregnant women and young children are especially vulnerable to mercury poisoning, also known as Minamata disease (Ibid).



The organization Mining Watch Canada has published some of the other environmental impacts from the Victor mine. Taken directly from their website (published in 2006, accessed in March of 2015, emphasis my own), these include:

Water impacts:

- 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> of salty water will be pumped out of the pit each day into the Attawapiskat River. This is equivalent to 40 Olympic-sized swimming pools per day or 14,600 per year.
- The flow of the Nayshkatooyaow River will be decreased by at least 15%.
- A 2.6 kilometre stretch of South Granny Creek will be “moved”.
- 1.2 million m<sup>3</sup> of muskeg, including trees and other plants, will be removed.
- River crossings may lead to siltation of rivers and creeks and impact water quality.
- Fish populations such as lake sturgeon, brook trout, walleye and whitefish may be harmed by the changes in water flow and water quality.
- Methyl mercury may be released by the dewatering of the muskeg

Land impacts:

- 2.5 million tonnes of rock would be processed (piled, crushed and dumped) each year.
- 28.7 million tonnes of rock would have been dug from the ground over the life of the mine and dumped in the surrounding area.
- The waste rock may leach chemicals, such as acids, into the surrounding water.
- The mine would sit on top of a nationally significant geological feature called a karst, which has been described as the “best developed and most extensive karst topography in Ontario.”

Wildlife impacts:

- The area of the proposed mine and its associated infrastructure provides critical habitat for woodland caribou, a threatened species. Woodland caribou are extremely sensitive to industrial

activity and usually disappear from areas where it occurs. After the mine closes and the site is re-vegetated, studies say that “excellent habitat for moose” (shrubs and young forest) will be created, which also means that the habitat that previously supported caribou (older forest and bogs) will be diminished. This may result in the local extinction of caribou.

- The water table would be affected for up to 260,000 hectares surrounding the mine. This would dry out muskeg, change the vegetation of the area and reduce the abundance of lichens, a key food for caribou.
- The noise of the explosives used to construct the mine and from pit operations combined with trucks bringing supplies and materials to and from the mine site (60 trucks per day) would negatively impact wildlife behaviour.
- Easier motorized access (better and more roads) to and in the region will increase hunting pressure on game species.
- Habitat for migratory birds will also be affected.

## 4.5 Resistance

In 2009 band members from Attawapiskat blocked the ice road leading to the Victor mine, citing their lack of satisfaction with the Impact and Benefit Agreement (Obomsawin 2012). Again in 2013, protests erupted for the same reasons (Barrera 2013, CBC 2013c). In all cases, band members said that they believed that the IBA was not serving the community as they thought it would. Community members cite lost trap lines, environmental concerns, housing needs (Barrera 2013), employee terminations, and racism (CBC 2013c) as reasons to protest. In all cases, community members claim that their problems are rooted in conflicting interpretations of the IBA with De Beers, with one band member accusing the corporation of “trickery” in its negotiations (Barrera 2013).

There are also conflicts in regards to royalties that have supposedly been gained by Attawapiskat from the Victor diamond mine. Jacqueline Hookimaw-Witt has gone on record with the CBC saying that “[f]or those people that are working, they seem to have money, they can feed their families. But it's only a certain percentage that are working” (2013c). According to the Ontario Mining Association (OMA), De Beers Victor mine

employs approximately 440 people, of whom 180 are considered “Aboriginal” (2012). However, no other information is given regarding where these “Aboriginal” bodies live or whether they are from local communities.

Other media interviews with Attawapiskat band members claim that royalties are not being passed down to communities and are not being used for social services (Keevil 2011). Attawapiskat receives approximately \$2 million dollars per year from De Beers, and that money is held in a trust fund account set up by the chief and band council (Keevil 2011). It has been reported that Attawapiskat uses the trust fund to save the royalties for the benefit of future generations (Driscoll 2013). The same report states that it is common practice for First Nations who receive royalties from resource development to invest their trust fund monies in the global stock market, purchasing stocks from hundreds of companies including “Apple, Disney, and Chinese cell phone companies.” So, rather than royalty monies being used for community development, the finances that are passed down from transnational corporations go on to fuel the capitalist economy. It could very well be the case that in situations like Attawapiskat, the royalty monies filter back into stocks for the very corporation doing the extracting. This is an ingenious manipulation of finances and business which sees companies essentially paying back into their own stocks.

It is difficult to determine whether any of the money received from De Beers is being used for anything other than investment. It is clear, however, that De Beers is monitoring media in Canada, assuring that their corporate image is one which posits the company as generous. For example, an online CTV article which discusses sexual Abuse in Attawapiskat contains the following disclaimer along the top:

*An earlier online version of this story incorrectly stated as fact that revenues from the De Beers mining operation don't trickle down to reserve families. This statement should have been attributed as the opinion of one resident, as it was in the accompanying news video report.*

*The community receives various compensation as a result of the construction and operation of the mine, including direct financial payments from De Beers Canada. (CTV 2011, italics in original)*

According to a De Beers PowerPoint report from 2011, De Beers claims that its gross revenue to date was \$488.8 million (De Beers Canada and Sustainable Development Strategies Group 27). The same report states that the amount which the company has transferred to Attawapiskat's trust account is approximately \$10.5 million (18), this means that Attawapiskat receives approximately 2% of revenues from diamonds pulled from the earth. In a "quick facts" section of a De Beers PDF about the Victor mine, the company claims to have spent \$2.9 million on "social investment," though it is unclear what kinds of "social investment" have been made (n.d. 2). In its official policy entitled, "Working with Aboriginal Communities," the following statement appears:

De Beers Canada believes that projects must benefit and add to the sustainability of local communities. Socio-economic development will be a primary focus through community participation in employment and business opportunities in all stages of the mineral development process from exploration, evaluation, mine development, production and closure. (2002/2014)

## 4.6 Moving forward

The De Beers group of companies is currently trying to expand the Victor diamond mine, due to new kimberlite deposits having been discovered nearby. The Victor Mine Extension Project, also known as the Tango Extension, is currently under another Environmental Assessment. An executive summary of the extension project claims that the company is "endeavouring to engage its partner First Nations in the collection and documentation of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Land Use, to supplement the data that was [sic] obtained in support of the development and approval of the adjacent Victor Mine" (De Beers 2012:xvii). According to a De Beers press release, if the project is deemed profitable, De Beers hopes to begin processing ore from the Tango Extension as early as 2018 (2013c:30). 2018 is the same year that De Beers had originally planned to begin closing the Victor diamond mine.

## Chapter 5

### 5 The Innu Nation and the Voisey's Bay nickel mine

The Innu are a distinct people who have occupied the land that is now called “the Québec/Labrador Peninsula” for at least 8000 years (Nametauinnu 2010a; Samson and Pretty 2006:529). The Innu call this place *Nitassinan* (Wadden 1991; Samson 2003a:10). From time immemorial until the mid-twentieth century, they lived a permanent nomadic lifestyle, traveling around *Nitassinan*, following the sacred caribou and other game (Samson and Pretty 2006:529). The Innu, an independent and resilient people, resisted sedentarism and the aggressive assimilationist policies imposed by the Crown, missionaries, and eventually the government of “Canada” until the mid-twentieth century. During the colonial process, a border was drawn through *Nitassinan*, separating two newly created political zones called “Québec”, and “Labrador”. This chapter focuses on the Innu who are assembled in two villages, located on the “Labrador” side of *Nitassinan*.

#### 5.1 Nitassinan

Like the Inninew discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of the Innu in Labrador did not “settle” until the 1960s (Samson 2003a:27). The following chapter outlines the process of sedentarization and forced assimilation experienced by the Innu. In this chapter, I hope to elucidate the Innu’s worldview which—like the Inninew of the James Bay (the Omushkegowuk)—is deeply connected to the ecology in which they have been rooted since time immemorial. Also like the Omushkegowuk, the Innu must now cope with deep seated emotional and psychological wounds as a result of colonialism.

After decades of attempting to eradicate and otherwise ignore the Innu, political and corporate authorities now seek to involve them in large-scale resource extraction through negotiations regarding various Impact and Benefit Agreements as well as through promises to finally settle a land claim. The subliminal message is that industrial growth will improve the lives and communities of the Innu through the delivery of “jobs” and royalty payments.

However, cash does not neutralize the human and social costs of industrial growth. Rather, the sudden influx of money has only served to aggravate social disruption. Like the use of religion in the pursuit of colonial domination, cash is used as a tool to pacify the Innu, and in the meantime, assures that the momentum of industrial growth will continue to increase. This strategy conceals the trauma of colonialism, which is expressed through substance abuse, violence, and suicide. Rather than acknowledging that social pathology among the Innu is an outcome of colonialism, the neoliberal agenda posits that material poverty is the cause of psychological distress, therefore, industrialization is presented by the bourgeois as a natural solution. This process is but a mere extension of the colonial mission to convert the Innu from primitive accumulation of capital, to the trap of wage labour. The last section of this chapter focuses on one of the newest incarnations of such industrial projects: the Voisey's Bay Nickel Mine, owned and operated by Vale Newfoundland and Labrador Limited.

For this research, I draw largely from the body of work produced Colin Samson (2014; 2013; 2009; 2003a; 2003b; Samson and Pretty 2006), a sociologist who has been working with (and sometimes for) the Innu since 1994.

## 5.2 History and social organization of the Innu

The Innu are what English-speakers call "Algonkian speaking peoples" which includes the Cree (Inninew) of the James Bay and Hudson Bay (Wadden 1991:22), some of whom were discussed in the previous chapter. The Inninew and the Innu regard themselves as separate peoples and although similar, their languages are not easily understood by one another. Wadden (1991) compares this relationship to the French, Spanish, and Italians in Europe whose languages derive from Latin, but who maintain separate national and cultural identities (22). Similarities between the two worldviews and communication styles are logical outcomes of cultures who have developed over millennia as a reflection of the land. The Inninew of the James Bay and the Innu of Nitassinan can be thought of in Western terms as 'neighbors.' The people belong to large spaces of land and ecology which exist beside each other, with the Hudson Bay and James Bay bodies of water separating the two peoples. Nitassinan consists of land which expands to the east from the Atlantic coast of what is now called "Labrador", to the James Bay on the West, the

Hudson Bay to the North and the Saguenay River to the South (Ibid:21). This piece of land is approximately the size of France (Samson and Pretty 2006:529). The language spoken by the Innu is called Innu-aimun and developed as a reflection of Nitassinan. “Its vocabularies are tied to place, landscape, animals, and techniques of survival. It contains words and phrases for which there are no direct translations in English. Many of these are associated with the landscape—the flow of rivers, the solidity of ice, the body parts of animals, and so forth” (Samson 2003a:201).

The worldview of the Innu, as expressed in the formation of their language, is one which reflects the ecology of Nitassinan. Oral history posits the Innu as beings who coexist with other creatures on the land in a system based on equality. The Innu believe that *Pishum*—the sun and the moon—have a responsibility to watch over the planet. Humans and other creatures have a responsibility to look after the ecology where they live, “each relying upon the others for survival” (Wadden 1991:22). From the Innu perspective, humans have no greater importance than any other creature, and of all the entities which exist in *Nitassinan*, animals in particular are assigned human-like qualities based on thousands of years of observation (Ibid). The Innu’s worldview is based on consensual decision-making, communitarianism, attachment to *Nitassinan*, the belief in independence and personal autonomy, as well as their technologies, medicine, spirituality, and their language (Samson 2003a:19-20). The Innu possess no sense of private property or individualism.

Before forced sedentarism, the Innu travelled in small groups made up of varying families, in search of food over the vast expanse of *Nitassinan*, which scientifically consists of “tundra, lakes, rivers, and forests” (Samson 2003a:27). Within these small traveling groups, the Innu did not have a central “chief” or leader. Rather, temporary leadership roles were sometimes assigned to individuals for particular expeditions, when needed. The temporary leader is known as the *utshimau*, who anyone could follow but without obligation (Ibid:27). Under Innu social organization, the authority of the *utshimau* was open to all and thus, different people were the *utshimau* at different times (Ibid). Women and men were of equal importance, and all played very important roles especially in regards to the timing of travel (Ibid; Wadden 1991:29). Today, the term

*utshimau* is sometimes used jokingly to refer to someone who is being bossy or is attempting to influence the decision making of other people (Samson 2013:viii). The Innu way of social organization seeks to minimize internal conflict, as described by sociologist Colin Samson: “The highly fluid patterns of social organization, communality, and aversion to any type of authority may have helped to ensure survival in sometimes unforgiving territories where any type of open conflict could compromise it” (2003a:27).

### 5.2.1 Innu traditional spirituality

Though the Innu do not traditionally have fixed roles for leadership, their spiritual and moral authority are exercised by specific people known as *kamintushit* or *kakushapatak*, who may be considered a type of shaman or medicine person by European interpretations (Samson 2003:28; Wadden 1991:23-24). The *kamintushit* is responsible for performing the most sacred ritual, the *kushapatshikan* or “shaking tent” which in times of need, was used to communicate with the animal gods to ensure the future supply of food, and then to predict where game would be found (Samson 2003:28; Wadden 1991:23-24). The ceremony is called “shaking tent” because the tent would shake from the great powers that entered (Wadden 1991:24). Many Innu elders recount their experiences in the shaking tent as intense and imbued with great meaning, as exemplified by an Innu hunter named Mistanikashan:

When the Kakushapatak [one imbued with great power to contact animal spirits] went into the tent, he wasn't completely inside when it started shaking...he didn't touch the ground. He was raised up about a foot off the ground, inside the tent. He was in the air. He danced inside. He danced. Through his song he invoked the spirit, Mishtapeu. He danced and we heard his steps. His steps resonated as though he was dancing on sand. We heard it like that. And when he came out, we did not see his tracks...nothing was broken...the branches were as though they had never been touched when the Kakushapatak came out (Lamothe 1983, quoted by Wadden 1991:23)

Like the Omushkegowuk discussed in the previous chapter, the Innu worldview is composed of spiritual, emotional, physical, intuitive and psychological interpretations of the universe. As such, dreams are an important tool for the Innu as they allow intuition, experience, memory, facts, and emotions to intermingle (Samson 2003a:79). Another



tool for Innu interpretation is the use of burned animal bones as maps. Such a process involves inserting the shoulder blade (scientifically known as the scapula) of a large animal, usually a caribou, into a hot fire. When the bone is withdrawn, the hunter interprets the marks left by the flames as a map which tracks the route of game (Samson 2003a:78). A similar Cree ritual is beautifully described in the novel *Three Day Road* by Joseph Boyden (2005):

I let the fire die down, then removed the still-hot shoulder blade. I studied the lines for a long time, talking as I did so that you might begin to understand the thinking. This animal had lived all its life in this country, and just like all of us it carried an internal map of its life, where it liked to eat, to rest, to mate. And where this moose had been, others surely would congregate. The job of the diviner was to coax this information from the animal.

“This crack,” I asked, running my finger along it, “does the way it forks into three remind you of any creek you might have been on?”

Immediately you answered, “There is the creek a half-day’s paddle down the river that looks much like that.”

“But there are many creeks that split into three,” I said.

You stared at the bone for a long time. “But the creek I think of runs from another creek that looks just like this one.” You pointed to another crack that ran into the one split into three.

I smiled. “Do you get a good feeling from it?” I asked. You looked at me quizzically. “When you picture walking up this creek, do you get the feeling that you will find a moose here, or do you feel nothing?”

You thought about this, your eyes closed, then finally answered, “I get a good feeling.”

“You will leave tomorrow before first light,” I said. (291-292)

Tragically, colonial invasion, especially from the late nineteenth century onward, has gradually but significantly changed the physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological lives of the Innu. Like the Omushkegowuk, Christian missionaries barred Innu ways of knowing, shaming them into Christian submission. For example, though it is discussed lovingly and longingly by the Innu, the people claim that they do not possess the confidence to perform a shaking tent anymore. The result is that the shaking tent has not been performed in what is now called “Labrador” since the 1960s (Samson 2003a:261; Walker 1996). Trappers and traders from the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) attempted for years to strategically convert the Innu from an autonomous people, to exploited labourers, but the Innu resisted.

### 5.3 Akaneshault influence over the Innu: sedentarization

In the nineteenth century, the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) set up trading posts in some of the more northerly parts of *Nitassinan*, both on the coast and in the interior. The intention of the HBC invaders was to make available tools and food upon which it was hoped the Innu would become dependent. In return for survival tools, it was hoped that the Innu would trade furs which were to be sold in Europe. The HBC scheme was to create a system of forced labour, whereby Indigenous people's only choices were to participate in the fur trade, or die of starvation and illness. This process is what Karl Marx (1844) describes as "the alienation of labour". Marx explains that under the capitalist model of wage labour, the human being produces work that is not for herself, but for someone else's consumption. As such, the worker is removed from her personal (emotional, spiritual, psychological) investment in labour, and instead her work merely produces survival; "[Her] labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it" (74).

To the disappointment of HBC invaders, however, the Innu's worldview places high value on their spiritual connection to everyday activity, as well as on independence, which is not individualism. As such, the Innu did not, at first, express much interest in trading with the Akaneshault (the Innu-aimun word for people of European decent) (Samson 2003a:127). Despite every attempt by employees of the HBC, the Innu remained relatively independent, trading only sporadically out of desperation when caribou populations were low (Samson 2003a:130). Overall, the fur trade in what is now known as Labrador, was unsuccessful and this had much to do with the tenacity of the Innu (Ibid:132). Many traders lamented the independence of this Indigenous population, whom they regarded as the "Indians" of the North—as opposed to the Inuit, then known as "Eskimo" who occupy the most northerly parts of *Nitassinan* (Samson 2013:18). The demanding conditions created in the tundra encouraged determination and autonomy which is so much a part of Innu cultural understandings. Such a belief system proved hard to break. The Innu preferred traveling around *Nitassinan*, hunting for caribou as they always had. For the Innu, trapping fur-bearing animals for the Hudson Bay

Company was regarded as a distraction from hunting (a sacred act) and enjoying leisure time with family (Samson 2003a:131).

In order to instill dependence in the Innu, traders were willing to engage in merciless behaviours “to ensure that the Indians played the game according to HBC rules” (Samson 2003a: 128). These behaviours included introducing European tools, ammunition, tobacco, fabrics, food, and alcohol on which it was hoped that the Innu would become dependent (Nametauinu 2010b). When the Innu’s work was deemed inadequate, these items would be denied them which caused distress and starvation. A great deal of death was recorded at this time due to the cruelty of the traders (Samson 2003a:127-128).

The Akaneshault tried desperately to break the Innu’s autonomy in the sub-arctic region of *Nitassinan*. In what is perhaps the most telling predictor of what Innu life would become in modern times, HBC traders specifically used alcohol as a means to instill dependence and a desire for paid employment (Samson 2003a:131). In fact, all across North America, Indigenous people were seduced by promises of “firewater” or “grog”. In some instances, traders would lure their prey with rum or whisky, then trade watered-down or even poisonous alcohol for items they wanted. In other cases, traders simply waited until the Indigenous people were so intoxicated that they humbly gave away their pelts without receiving any items for survival in return (Samson 2003a:352).

In the late nineteenth century, the bourgeois class at the time, who were the HBC, the federal government, the Church, and the Crown, wanted to free *Nitassinan* of “Indian” occupation, so as to open opportunity for European and Euro-Canadian invasion and subsequent “settlement” (Samson 2003a:91). Within a few decades, it was believed that the land possessed great amounts of natural resources to be exploited which intensified invasion. Mineral deposits, timber, water resources, and fish were some of the most attractive features which sparked economic interest at the time (Ibid:95). As such, missionaries began visiting the HBC trading posts, and while there, would pressure the Innu to stay out of settlement’s way by assembling and remaining in one place. Eventually, Father Edward O’Brien, a Catholic Priest who “served” the Innu of Labrador from 1920-1946, managed to pressure the people to settle in two villages, the first is

known as Sheshatshiu (sometimes spelled Sheshatshit), and the second (now abandoned) would become the village of Davis Inlet (known locally as Utshimassits), created in 1967 (Wadden 1991:61).

### 5.3.1 The use of religion in sedentarism

In the early twentieth century, European and Euro-Canadian invaders were spreading across *Nitassinan* in search of land and wealth. Naturally, the invasion created conflict with the Innu, and both parties became increasingly worried about the threat of violence (Wadden 1991:60). The Innu appealed to the HBC, and other members of the Canadian and British bourgeois for help, and in return the Innu were sent a priest. Father Edward O'Brien convinced the Innu that to be safe, it would be best to camp at a trading post where he built a church. This place would become the village now known as Sheshatshiu (Ibid).

The more time that Innu people spent in the newly created village under the influence of Father O'Brien, the more easily dangerous diseases like tuberculosis spread. Such diseases killed many, and also "weakened the Innu social fabric [resulting] in greater dependence on Church, hospital and government charity, a dependence many Innu found repugnant" (Wadden 1991:61-62). Iskuess Pasteen, a Sheshatshiu Innu elder, describes life at this time:

The priest would come to visit us where we were camped. He would ask the families to come and reside in the community. The priest would do this with other people living in the community. My mother says that the priest got really angry because there was no one living in the community. The Innu people were afraid of the priest. He controlled them and told them what to do. He Christianized them. The Innu would still be living in the country if it wasn't for the priest, and people would still be living their spiritual beliefs if there weren't white people around. The church was very filled up because the priest controlled the people. I never liked the priest telling us what to do and other people as well (Iskuess Pasteen, Innu Nation 1993:27, quoted in Samson 2003a:167)

Similarly, Innu who were camped further North of Sheshatshiu (known as the Mushuau Innu) had grown sick and hungry from lack of game. Out of desperation, the Innu moved in larger numbers to a trading post on the coast at Davis Inlet (Burns 2006:67; Samson 2003a:29; Walker 1996). Once there, the Innu were met with the same priest, Father

Edward O'Brien, who not only employed cultural shaming, but also imposed "European-style political authority on the assembled Innu" (Samson 2003a:29). Father O'Brien appointed one Innu *man* the "chief" in each community and bestowed on him great favouritism (Ibid). Given the egalitarian interpretations of life among the Innu, the act of bestowing "chiefdom" only to men is a clear imposition of systemic gender and age discrimination which has had long lasting influence on the social structure of the Innu today.

Further, through enacting favouritism on particular men through chiefdom, the priests demonstrated the "benefits" received by those who were willing to "Europeanize." Additionally and "[t]o a large extent, the chief unwittingly became an instrument of the priest" (Ibid). Father Edward O'Brien also learned the Innu-aimun language so as to act as an intermediary between the Innu and the encroaching governments of Britain and Canada. By learning the Innu language, the priest—as a representative of the Church—was able to gain trust, restrict movement, influence decision-making, and act as a filter for all incoming and outgoing messages between the Innu and the outside world (Ibid).

Accepting the word of a Christian God also meant accepting a great deal of humiliation and indignity for being Innu. Again, the work of Frantz Fanon (1952/2008; 1963/2004) is relevant here as Indigenous people were stripped of their autonomy and self-worth through the epidermalization of inferiority. By convincing the Innu that their skin colour marked them as inferior, and that their polytheistic and ritualistic religion was evil, the Church could simultaneously control the Innu, while also pacifying them with the message of redemption through "Jesus". Eventually, the influence wielded by Father O'Brien over the Innu, manifested in perceptions of him as God-like. When asked why the Innu listened to Father O'Brien, Elizabeth Penashue explains that her mother believed that "[h]e's like Jesus. When he says something, you got to do it" (Samson 2003a:30). Thus, if the Innu could please Father O'Brien, perhaps they could also be redeemed for their "savagery" through listening to him. Fanon (1963/2004) argues that colonialism seeks to convince colonized populations that it can "save them from darkness". The goal of the Church was to "hammer into the heads" of colonized people that "if the colonist were to leave they would regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality" (149). In

order to do so, the Church needed to convince the people to fear their own identity, that way, the people would become loyal followers. This process is remembered by an elder in John Walker's documentary about the people of Davis Inlet:

Every time we had a drum dance, the priest would show up and move us away. He told us the drum dance was nothing and that it was not good. He would pull us away every time we tried to dance. But we still tried. The priest told us to leave the tent. Because it would not do us any good. We loved to see a drum dance. We liked to hear the elders sing. Slowly, our culture disappeared (1996).

### 5.3.2 The social and political construction of borders: drawing lines through Nitassinan

It is important to consider that all people and cultures change and adapt to new surroundings over time, this is how culture survives over thousands of years. However, the Innu did not choose to change, the violence of colonialism was imposed on the Innu, as it was in so many other colonized places. As "Canada" is still a colonized place, the Innu remain subjects of colonialism.

The Innu reacted to the Christian sedentary lifestyle by leaving the communities periodically to go camp and hunt in *nutshimit*, the Innu word which was created to describe "the country" (Samson 2013:xii). However, in 1927 a border was drawn between the Canadian province of Québec and the British colony of Labrador, further complicating access to a nomadic lifestyle in *Nitassinan*, as anyone could be arrested for hunting on the 'wrong side' of the border (Wadden 1991:4). The creation of the Québec/Labrador border also disrupted thousands of years of Innu kinship ties and social organization, as explained by José Mailot (1997:31):

One must realize that the history of a mobile people such as the Innu is completely different from that of village communities, and that the question of whether the people of Sheshatshit are originally from Quebec or Labrador is, consequently, a false issue. When they were nomadic hunters the Innu travelled with ease throughout the whole eastern half of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula. Each group maintained close relations with its neighbours; there were marriages between members of different groups, and individuals readily changed groups and went to live in new territories (quoted in Samson 2003a:70)

Later, in 1949, Newfoundland and Labrador joined the Canadian confederation. In doing so, the two governments decided not to extend the *Indian Act* in the newly formed province. In fact, there was no mention at all of the Indigenous population in any of the agreements between the two governments. Instead, the Innu were regarded as any other Canadian citizen without special consideration for land rights or self-determination (Innu Nation 2008; Samson 2003a:15). The Innu's "enfranchisement" lasted for more than fifty years, and as such they were not granted "status" by the federal and provincial governments until 2002 (Higgins 2008). Despite the abusive nature of the *Indian Act*, which seeks to homogenize and dominate Indigenous people, the *Indian Act* also offers a legal opportunity (under laws invented by "Canada") for special recognition of traditional life and activities on the land. Without these "rights" the Innu would be "breaking laws" for hunting, fishing, and subsistence gathering, under the strict conservation laws of Newfoundland and Labrador (Wadden 1991:73).

When Newfoundland and Labrador joined the Canadian confederation, it was widely recognized that Labrador was full of natural resources which could be exploited (Samson 2003a:95). Had the new province adopted the *Indian Act*, then the Innu would have to be granted "Aboriginal rights," which had the serious potential of threatening industrial growth and would cost the federal government a great deal of money. As such, "[i]f industrialization was [sic] to succeed and Labrador was [sic] to be an actor on the stage of global capitalism, then nomadic hunters had to be both cleared from the lands and made to see the sense behind resource extraction (Samson 2003a:15). Thus, the process of sedentarism and the instillation of capitalist values became a crucial strategy for the provincial and federal governments. The result is that the federal government agreed to provide funds to the province for the delivery of education, housing, and health care services in the distinctly sedentarized village settings of Sheshatshiu, and Davis Inlet (Innu Nation 2008), the latter known to the Innu as *Utshimassits*, which translates humorously in English to "place of the boss" (Walker 1996)

### 5.3.3 Education as Cultural Imperialism

"Schooling was a prime justification used by the missionaries and the Canadian authorities to settle the Innu in villages" (Samson 2003b:47). Just like the

Omushkegowuk of Attawapiskat, schooling was used, in conjunction with the church, as a tool by the colonizers, economically and politically to control the Innu. These institutions provided an opportunity to train the colonized people to be disciplined, to permit predictability, and to submit to dominance. This is consistent with the literature on education as cultural imperialism (Carnoy 1974), as discussed in chapter two of this thesis. Carnoy argues that the European model of schooling seeks to train colonized people for roles which support the colonizer (3). Thus, the goal of “education” was to train the Indigenous population to be a productive working class, which could then be exploited to support the dominant classes in their economic and political pursuits (Samson and Pretty 2006:529). And, while the Innu were being trained for exploitation, they would remain sedentary in the villages, freeing land for further colonial encroachment.

After Newfoundland and Labrador joined the Canadian confederation in 1949, emphasis was placed on the use of schools as a means to keep the Innu in one place, train them into submission, and prepare them for wage labour. “So vital to this project were the schools, that they were established in the villages even before houses were built” (Samson 2003b:47). In the 1950s, Father Joseph Pirson was particularly influential in this regard. Father Pirson would physically beat children who did not strictly conform to European customs and schooling expectations. If children did not attend school, he physically intimidated and bribed parents into submission. If parents resisted still, the priest created a policy which threatened to sever welfare payments for truancy. Although Father Pirson’s methods may be regarded as “extreme” in hindsight, they did not end with him. In fact, the policy which economically punished parent’s for children’s absence in school was in place until the 1980s (Ibid). Tragically, economic violence was not the only trend that began with Father Pirson. Cycles of sexual abuse have been sewn into the communities of Sheshatshiu and Utshimassits through the Church and schools alike. Colin Samson (2003b) explains:

What many Innu have revealed indicates that sexual abuse has been a fairly constant feature of the attempt to assimilate them. It has involved a number of teachers and clergy stretching back to the early period of settlement until the mid



1990s when two teachers were exposed as child sex abusers and another Roman Catholic priest was ejected from Sheshatshiu for the same reason (50).

Cycles of trauma have been passed down intergenerationally since the horror that is colonialism was imposed on the Innu people.

#### 5.4 Psychosomatic trauma as a result of colonialism

By almost every measure, the Innu's quality of life has declined extensively since sedentarization. Rates of suicide, alcoholism, infant mortality, and epidemic levels of gas sniffing are some of the highest in the world (Samson 2003a:10). Sexual abuse did not remain confined within the walls of educational and religious institutions, but rather, bled into the daily lives of people who tragically repeat the abuse cycle. To alleviate the pain, community members seek relief through substance abuse and suicide. Thus, a vicious cycle of pain which begins with colonialism, gets passed down through the Innu people from one generation to the next, in the same way that ancestral belief systems have traditionally been carried forward. Again, Colin Samson describes vividly the cycles of abuse which pass through his Innu friends and colleagues. In this circumstance, three teenage boys in the same family were assaulted by the same trusted teacher:

After the incidents and a public court case, the boys were called 'queer' and 'gay'; and adult men in particular teased them about the incidents as if it were the boys' fault. In 1999, one of these young men put a shotgun barrel in his mouth and blew away most of his head. Another man in his early 20s recalled being fondled by a teacher when he was in Grade 2. As a result, he grew up thinking that this kind of exploitation of children was normal. Often, as a consequence, those who were victims became victimizers in adulthood (Ibid:49)

Eventually the Innu were placed in permanent housing, most of which had no plumbing or furniture, and only a single power outlet (Burns 2006:68). The Innu have learned to internalize these living conditions as explained by a young woman in an Innu-made documentary entitled: *Ntapueu: I am telling the truth* (Innu Nation 1997): "We bury the things deep inside, the ones that really bother us, like the use of too much alcohol, kids sniffing, poor housing, no water".

These cycles of abuse are compounded by the disconnection from *Nitassinan*, which not only severs the Innu from their traditional culture, but also severs them from personal and

collective autonomy. The federal government's requirement that the communities have a singular "chief" and operate a "band council" is problematic as it is so far removed from Innu social organization (Burns 2006:65; Samson 2003a:35). The installation of "democracy" among the Innu of both communities means that election times are stressful events in the community. Alcohol is often used as bribery to buy votes during elections (though, of course, not by all candidates), and election times are often times of binge drinking, violence, and other hostilities (Samson 2014:250; Samson 2003a:36). Decisions made by leaders in the community are often associated with favoritism and family ties—a reflection of traditional Innu social organization based on family solidarity (Samson and Pretty 2006:79). George Rich explains:

[T]he election system created division and took away the elders' traditional role. It also brought all the kinds of corruption elections can have. In our small community, people with large families can control band council elections and government. Also, anyone who has a lot of alcohol can win a seat on the council. Now every year we have elections in Davis Inlet, mainly because people crave influence or business contracts or good employment from the council (2000:35, quoted in Samson 2003a:36)

Elected leaders are often caught in a web of difficult decisions and social situations. Most especially, the Innu leadership must work with a federally constructed government which does not adequately serve the needs of the people. During a court hearing in 1988, Penote Michael explains:

Those of us drawn into positions on the councils find ourselves expected to act in ways which are not only counter to norms of Innu behaviour but which amount to serving as proxies for our colonizers in administering the government villages....Here we are expected to preside over little empires of chronic financial dependency, watching the foreigners' welfare money flow in while our people and culture disintegrate around us (Ibid: 36-37)

All of this trauma came to a head when in 1993, six children left unattended, died in a house fire while their guardians were out drinking in *Utshimassits* (Davis Inlet) (Burns 2006:64). Motivated for change, the Innu mobilized and lobbied for help. The Innu were ignored by the provincial and federal governments until later in the year, when the CBC broadcast a video of young Innu children sniffing gas and stating that they wanted to die (Burns 2006:64). These images were launched into living rooms all over the world by

international journalists interested in the story. The embarrassment on the part of the Canadian government heightened the pressure to begin listening to the Innu's demand for change. Eventually, a referendum was held in *Utshimassits* (Davis Inlet) and it was decided that the Mushuau Innu of Davis Inlet would be moved to a new community which is 15km west of the original settlement (Ibid: 64). From 1997 to 2003, the federal government spent approximately \$165 million creating the new village of Natuashish (AANDC 2010b). It may seem that the government spent a lot of money to "help" the Innu. However, in 1994 during the planning stages of Natuashish, one of the world's richest nickel deposits was discovered just 75km north of Davis Inlet (Burns 2006:68; Samson 2003a:96). Surely it was hoped that large-scale resource extraction in *Nitassinan* would help offset the cost of moving the Mushuau Innu. Additionally, the move would—in the eyes of the bourgeois authority—assure a healthier, more accessible, working force for what would eventually become the Voisey's Bay Nickel mine.

Unfortunately, however, colonial trauma cannot be washed off with soap and water in new houses. Social pathology followed the Innu to Natuashish. The Innu have been lobbying for healing and treatment centres in *Nutshimit*, similar to the one discussed in the previous chapter about the Omushkegowuk and their bush camp for solvent abusers. For a short while, the Innu ran a traditional school called *Tshiskutamashun* (See Samson 2003a:218-221) in the country which provided similar relief for youth seeking escape from the unhealthy atmosphere in the villages. However, after one year, the Sheshatshiu band council cut funding for the school. Since that time, efforts have been focused on the conventional school, and government funding has filtered into the medicalization of "addiction". State-led solutions to psychological, social, and emotional scarring are now an odd mix of "science" and pan-Indian "New Age" approaches to overcoming the perceived issue of biological addition. Now, federal funding is largely filtered through outside consultants, health, and social workers who continue to dislodge the people from the land, while also obfuscating the root cause of pathology, which is colonialism (Samson 2009) Further, the state continues to reinforce material solutions to psychosocial problems through an emphasis on materialism, infrastructure, and industrial growth.

## 5.5 Resource extraction and the Voisey's Bay nickel mine

The Innu of Labrador do not have a history of signing treaties, and therefore, any resource development in Nitassinan occurs on unceded territory. In 1993, the same year that six children were killed in the Davis Inlet house fire, two Prospectors noticed mineralized outcrop while flying over Voisey's Bay on their way home from work further north. The Prospectors, Albert Chislett and Chris Verbiski, delayed their flight home to investigate. Chislett and Verbiski discovered "exceptionally rich" deposits of copper, cobalt, and nickel (Gibson 2006:335). The Prospectors claimed the minerals on the behalf of Diamond Resources Inc. who later sold this piece of *Nitassinan* to the Canadian mining giant Inco for \$4.3 billion (Higgins 2011a; Gibson 2006:335). In 1995, Northern Miner elected Chislett and Verbiski "Mining *Men* of the Year" (Danielson 1995, emphasis my own).

### 5.5.1 Reaching an agreement to proceed with the mine

In 1976 the Innu of Sheshatshiu and Utshimassits organized to create the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association (NMIA). Later, in 1990, "the NMIA changed its name to the Innu Nation. Today the Innu Nation forms the governing body of the Labrador Innu". (Higgins 2008). The Innu Nation is funded by the federal government of Canada (Samson 2014:250).

In 1995, the Innu Nation served an eviction notice to Diamond Fields Resources for "exploring" (drilling, digging, testing, etc.) without Innu permission. The Innu set up a protest camp where a 12-day police standoff took place (Gibson 2006:339). Later, in 1997, the mining companies began building an airstrip and a doc before any environmental assessment had occurred at Voisey's Bay, known to the Innu as *Emish or Kaupiskatish-shipis* (Samson 2003a:98). The result was a joint-protest between the Inuit and the Innu of Labrador against Inco, who had purchased the company by this time. Heavily armed police managed to break-up the protests and the Innu eviction notice was ignored (Ibid:100).

Similar to the Omushkegowuk and the De Beers Victor Mine—and consistent with the literature discussed in previous chapters—it was clear that resource development at

Voisey's Bay was moving forward with or without the Innu's permission. It is only after public protests that resource "developers" have acknowledged the Innu's presence in *Nitassinan* and have offered them a "seemingly fair" political stake in the matter (Samson 2003a:99; Samson 1999:13). In 1997, the governments of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Innu Nation, and the Inuit Association (the Inuit political body), signed a "Memorandum of Understanding for a joint environmental assessment" (Gibson 2006:339).

In regards to the mining project, the Innu voiced great concerns for *Nitassinan*. The Innu sensed "environmental catastrophe, pointing out that mining would wreak immense ecological damage, polluting air, land, and water and destroying much of the habitat of animals on which they still depend" (Samson 2003:100). In addition, the Innu were worried that employment at the mine would disrupt their communities through the sudden influx of income for some families, and not others, as well as fears regarding increased alcohol and substance abuse (Gibson 2006:337-338). In addition to the construction of the mine, roads and other infrastructure would have to be built—meaning that the environmental impact would expand over an even larger portion of *Nitassinan*. Finally, the Innu also expressed concern that the mine would further entrench cultural assimilation and capitalist ideology in the communities. Edward Piwas explains his fears for *Emish* (the Innu name for Voisey's Bay):

There will be no fish, caribou, ducks, geese at Emish after the mining starts. The bear is different. The bear is like the Whiteman, but he can't live with them in the winter. He will walk around in the Emish camp. He will eat at the Whiteman's table because the *Akaneshau* has killed the fish in the river. The white people will keep the baby animals for pets and these animals will starve—they will not know how to hunt for themselves. Take for example the moose that was seen at Black Ash. It was lost and didn't know its migration route. Even the moose—he is the brother of the *Akaneshau*. He will walk on the streets of Emish with a tie. [...] The smog from the milling plant will kill the plants and animals. And it will float into our community. We will not see the smog—it will slowly kill the animals and us. They will probably not just drill in one place—they will drill all around us. The wildlife officer will know when he can't find any animals. He will blame us for the lack of them but he will not think about the drilling (Innu Nation 1996a:38, cited in Samson 2003a:111-112)

Despite anxieties expressed by the Innu about the Voisey's Bay mine, the governments and Inco pushed forward. Since mining is a finite endeavor, Inco's focus was on recovering the \$4.3 billion investment as well as beginning to maximize profits as quickly as possible. The provincial government's interest, on the other hand, was on ensuring that provincial gains would be extended over as long a period of time as possible (Gibson 2006:336). Subsequently, a great deal of focus during the environmental assessment process surrounded the issue of "sustainability". Not only was the word "sustainability" used to connote environmental protection, but was also closely associated with the extension of economic benefits over time.

Although the Innu were encouraged to participate in the environmental assessment process, their "consultation" came largely in the form of "research designed to placate or flatter the Innu, such as video-recordings of the people, their activities and opinions. They have no ultimate authority to determine the use to which this research is put or the outcome of the EIA. That authority is vested in a panel of outside consultants" (Samson 1999:13). In 1997 the panel created guidelines for the environmental impact assessment which included a test for "sustainability." Six months after the guidelines were submitted, Inco filled its proposal and impact assessment statement. The Innu Nation responded by submitting "a detailed report arguing that the proponent had failed on many grounds to meet the panel's requirements and did not provide satisfactory grounds for confidence that the project would make a positive overall contribution to sustainability" (Gibson 2006:340). Despite the Innu's concern and overall disagreement, in 1999 the panel deemed the project "acceptable" on the condition that certain measures be addressed. One of these was the provision that Impact and Benefit Agreements be reached with the Inuit and the Innu of Labrador (Ibid: 341).

### 5.5.2 Impact and Benefit Agreements

In 2002 separate, and confidential, Impact and Benefit Agreements were signed between Inco and the Inuit, as well Inco and the Innu Nation (Gibson 2006:339). Little has been written about the process or the content of negotiations for the IBAs with Inco as they are stickily confidential (Vale 2015). However, Inco could not move the project forward without reaching an IBA, as was concluded in the panel review (Canadian Environmental

Assessment Agency 2002:13). Given the company's investment of billions of dollars into the purchase of the mineral rights, and then the additional cost of exploration, the corporation's priority was to reach an agreement as soon as possible. As discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, IBAs are often negotiated in very short time frames that do not give Indigenous communities enough time to seek adequate legal resources or to process all of the information being discussed (Sosa and Keenan 2001:8). The vague and convoluted language that is often associated with corporate legalism is difficult to understand by most people's standards. That the majority of Innu speak Innu-aimun as their mother tongue and English as a second language, compounds the institutional power dynamics that are associated with negotiation and interpretation of IBAs. In addition, approximately 75 percent of residents of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish over the age of 15 do not have a high school diploma (Statistics Canada 2011a:27; Statistics Canada 2011b:27), meaning that few people in the community are educated to interpret such complicated language and legal jargon.

### 5.5.3 Employment and economic concerns

Voisey's Bay began its open-pit mining operations in 2005 (Vale 2015). Since that time, employment rates for the Innu do not appear to have been greatly affected by the nickel mine. In the 2011 Canadian census, 15 people from Sheshatshiu claimed to have been employed in the mining industry (2011a:32), whereas zero people in Natuashish reported working in the industry (2011b:32). This is telling considering that Natuashish is geographically closer to the mine. Samson reports that unemployment remains high in the communities, and any jobs that are available to the Innu are short-term and temporary (2013:82).

Financial benefits in the form of royalties have been a contentious issue among the Innu. High levels of financial corruption have been found among the Innu leadership. Social differentiation and internal friction—almost entirely absent before colonialism—now plague the Innu. Such corruption should not come as a surprise given the Innu's history of political corruption under the federal creation of an "Innu government" as represented by a singular "chief" and "council". For example, a report from the CBC (2005) reveals that rather than royalties being dumped into a trust fund—like those received in

Attawapiskat—royalties from Voisey’s Bay were being passed down to select members of the communities, band council, as well as the chiefs. Further, the influx of corporate investment in *Nitassinan* has resulted in new businesses opening such as the Innu Development Limited Partnership (IDLP). The IDLP is a for-profit corporation created jointly by the Natuashish and Sheshatshiu governments “to satisfy a need for Innu economic activity for both Labrador Innu communities”. The joint company is meant to provide training and create partnerships between the Innu Nation and corporate investment (IDLP 2015).

In 2012 Innu community members discovered that the former CEO of the IDLP was paid more than \$1million dollars over two years with revenues received by the IDLP (Samson 2014:263; CBC 2012). In addition, it was discovered that the IDLP donated \$25,000 to the federal cabinet minister Peter Penashue for his 2011 election campaign (CBC 2012). The Innu community reacted by protesting in front of the IDLP office and boarding up the building’s windows. “This is merely one example of a process that occurs around the world with the introduction of vast sums of money into small communities. Apart from the sluicing of monetary advances into Aboriginal villages that have signaled land claims, there is little of the ‘trickle down’ that advocates of corporate investment development often claim (Samson 2014:263).

In 2006, the mine was purchased from Inco by the Brazilian-owned mining giant Vale (Austen 2006). In 2012, Vale was voted the “worst company in the world” by a collective organization called The Public Eye, which is hosted by the Swiss non-profit organization the Berne Declaration as well as Greenpeace. The criteria for “worst company in the world” is based on a combination of labour and human rights abuses, environmental destruction, and corruption (Public Eye 2015).

#### 5.5.4 Ecological concerns about industrial growth

As discussed above, the Innu expressed great concern for environmental impacts of the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Mine, and with good reason. The mine now processes 6,000 tonnes of ore per day (Vale 2015) which means the removal of huge amounts of earth, rocks, and organisms. Surely, large-scale resource extraction such as an open-pit mining also has



impacts on migratory routes of land-based animals and birds. Beyond the obvious removal of rock, large amounts of oil, fuel, and chemicals are needed in order to separate nickel from ore. The waste from these procedures is dumped into tailing ponds (Higgins 2011b). In 2011, 600 cubic meters of tailings leaked into a nearby pond, contaminating the local drinking water used for employees (CBC 2012). Humans are not the only beings that drink from the pond, however. All organisms living in the pond, drinking from the pond, and landing in the pond would also be affected. Polluted water also seeps into local groundwater, and is evaporated into the sky before being re-deposited as rain. When bodies of water are polluted, the contaminants are automatically mobile because of the nature of ecology. Additional problems include dust generated from the mine which can compromise air quality, and contaminate local bodies of water, and damage fish. As well, the sudden influx of shipping boats to transfer ore to processing plants will impact local marine life, birds, caribou, and bears (Higgins 2011b). Just like the previous examples, the building and use of roads certainly adds to the local environmental destruction as well as the broader issue of climate change.

Tragically, the Voisey's Bay nickel mine is but one of many industrial growth projects affecting the ecology of *Nitassinan* since colonialism. First, European and Euro-Canadian adventurers, entrepreneurs, and trappers depleted fur-bearing animals, seals, and fish, for the capitalist market. Later, *Nitassinan* was used during the spring and summer months to train international military fighter jets (Wadden 1991: Samson 2003a:107-111). In 1979, Canada leased its air base at Goose Bay to NATO for air-defense exercises and bombing practices. "The simulated anxiety of war" caused great distress among the Innu (Samson 2003a:108). In areas where jets would fly as low as 100 feet from the ground at very high speeds (Ibid), dead fish have been found floating in the water, and caribou have been found dead with no wounds (Ibid: 109). The Innu protested the flights, some Innu women were even jailed for their resistance (see Wadden 1991 for a detailed ethnographic account). Eventually the flights did stop, but not because of Innu protests, but rather, because of the end of the cold war (Wadden 1991:6).

Just before simulated war began in *Nitassinan*, in 1972, a huge hydroelectric plant was constructed which flooded lake Meshikimau, a historically important and loved Innu

camping and fishing area, which turned “thousands of square kilometers of forest into an artificial lake [...] half the size of Lake Ontario” (Samson 1999:7). The flooding involved in such a project would have drowned copious amounts of organisms. Additionally, the building of the hydroelectric plant also turned an immense waterfall, taller than the Horseshoe Falls, into a mere trickle (Samson 2003a:102; Samson 1999:7).

## 5.6 Learning how to blame the Innu

So much of our land has been taken from us, we are being pushed to spend longer and longer periods of time in the community, it's like a gate has been put over us. We're told not to leave the community. They want us to live in shame so people from the outside can say: “They're just drunken Innu people, they're not worried about their land.” But it wasn't like this not too long ago. When we were in the country it was peaceful, not like today, younger kids attempting suicide and taking overdoses in the community. The Innu people are poor while the government and others are making riches from our land, they're making lots and lots of money from our land. (Maniaten, quoted in Wadden 1991:55)

The biggest difference between the Voisey's Bay nickel mine and the projects which existed before it, is that the Innu can be implicated in its decision making—though power differentials certainly weigh heavier on the federal, provincial, and corporate end of the bargain. Some scholars may legitimately believe that seeking input from the Indigenous population of Labrador through IBAs represents a political success for Indigenous people more generally (see O'Faircheallaigh 2013; Gibson 2006). However, an alternative interpretation would argue that Impact and Benefit Agreements are encouraged by governments and corporations as a route to ensure that projects move forward quickly and unimpeded by protest. Indigenous populations often participate in IBA negotiations because they perceive that resource extraction will move ahead, regardless of whether they are involved or not. That resource exploration can be done legally without consultation or consent from Indigenous populations only serves to intensify the perceived need to ‘get involved’. Indigenous communities may feel that they have little ability to stop industrial growth, and yet, IBAs present a financial incentive to welcome these projects both publically and privately.

For the Innu, both the “impacts” and the “benefits” of resource extraction are felt negatively. Environmental impacts are great and ongoing, and additionally, the

“benefits” handed down from corporations are not distributed evenly. The sudden influx of cash for some people, and not for others causes obvious and predictable disruptions both interpersonally and at the community level. Namely, the Innu experience demonstrates that internal friction and social differentiation, lack of social integration, and environmental destruction are predictable outcomes. That the Innu governing body is a construction of the federal government has meant that leadership roles are exploited and cause further community-level problems.

Colonial psychosomatic trauma cannot be solved through material means. That the Innu have been separated from their beloved lifestyle on the land has caused serious community-level and personal distress. Samson reminds us that the types of suicide experienced by the Innu are almost identical to what Émile Durkheim describes as “anomic” suicide, which is characterized by “a disturbance in the collective order, a breakdown of traditional authority, an attenuation of religion, and a rise in individualism” (2009:121). Durkheim taught that familiar patterns of social behaviour and organization bind people together to create a “society”. When these institutions are destroyed or are drastically changed, people no longer feel connected to those who surround them, and as a result, individuals no longer understand their purpose in society. When the Innu were sedentarized their whole world changed (Ibid). Colonialization continues to disrupt and alter traditional social organization while attempting to impose capitalist values and belief systems. For thousands of years, the Innu culture shifted and adapted to meet the demands of *Nitassinan*. However, the shift to sedentarism was not a voluntary move, but rather, was forced on the Innu through the violence of colonialism.

The colonial master’s strategies have morphed with the times in order to accomplish exponential economic growth through cognitive imperialism. The Innu’s resilience is expressed through their ongoing resistance to colonial forces. This is exemplified through the Innu’s retention of traditional language, their sense of humour as exemplified by their name for Davis Inlet, *Utshimassits*, which translates to “place of the boss”, the continuation of storytelling, and their love for *Nitassinan*. However, the colonizer’s strategies continue to evolve and the use of IBAs and the lure of settling long-standing

land claims remains a key platform from which the state can continue to dispossess and destroy the Indigenous population of “Canada”.

Since signing the Impact and Benefit Agreement for the Voisey’s Bay mine, the Innu have signed at least two more IBAs with other resource “development” companies (See Innu Nation 2015b, and Samson 2014:264-267). In addition, the Innu Nation and the federal government have reached an agreement-in-principle for an outstanding land claim from 1977. In his most recent publication, Samson argues that the land claims process in Canada seeks to “formalize land dispossession and transform Indigenous lands and ways of life to such an extent that it destroys a unique culture, and therefore can be considered a form of genocide” (2014:247). If the Innu sign the land claim presented by the government they will be sacrificing the ability to use huge expanses of *Nitassinan* for traditional purposes, and will also be dispossessing those Innu trapped in Québec of the land which they have roamed since time immemorial (Samson 2014). Since the Innu worldview is embedded in the surrounding ecology, then further dispossessing them of such ecology is also severing the people from their culture. In addition, signing the land claim confirms the Innu’s recognition of a legitimate and sovereign state, under which the Innu are its citizens. As such, ratifying the claim completes the colonial invasion by legitimizing the state’s power over the Innu and *Nitassinan* (Samson 2014:247).

When the Innu filed the land claim in 1977, they did so with the intention of stopping colonial encroachment and industrial growth in *Nitassinan*. However, the land claim is now being used as a tool for advancing industrial growth, further embedding the ideology of capitalism in the minds and attitudes of Innu decision makers. Land claims formally frame the commons as something which is and should be “owned” by people. The “take it or leave it” (Samson 2014:253) attitude espoused by the government and its consultants puts enormous pressure on the Innu to ratify the land claim, while simultaneously offering financial rewards for consent through the promise of industrial growth. Further, putting price tags on “resources” which are parts of an interdependent ecological system, has dangerous implications for the future, especially in the present context of climate change.

## Chapter 6

### 6 Discussion: resistance and decolonization

Colonialism is not a thing of the past, but rather, is as strong a force as ever in the present. As an extension of colonialism, the momentum of industrial growth and ecological destruction in our present day is jarring and dangerous. Land, resources, bodies, and minds continue to be aggressively appropriated in order to expand empire and feed the market economy. However, the mechanisms used by the colonizer have evolved over time, become more subtle, and therefore take more effort to identify. It is for this reason that I urge scholars, thinkers, activists, teachers, elders—well, everybody—to begin to think about how colonialism works, so that we may begin to dismantle it, this most certainly includes people with non-indigenous identities. A call to think, is also a call to action.

The present chapter seeks to identify the ugly but familiar patterns of colonialism which are revealed through a comparison of Attawapiskat First Nation and the Innu Nation. In doing so, I seek to make more clear how strategies of social control throughout the colonial process cause great pain and human suffering—these are the social costs of industrial growth, and they are ongoing. In this discussion, I hope to provide an important counter narrative to the preposterous version of history which is taught in contemporary schools—the version which perpetuates the “civilizing” and “progressive” narrative of the colonizer; a history which teaches that colonialism in the place which is now called “Canada” is a thing of the past. I finish the discussion through an exploration of decolonization. Given that much of the indignity experienced by Indigenous people is as a result of being told what to do, my focus is not on decolonizing the Innu or Inninew mind—this is a journey that must be realized through the individuals and communities themselves. I outline some research coming from self-identified Indigenous scholars who are exploring the meaning of decolonization. As a way to subvert the norm which continues to blame Indigenous and other racialized people for their misfortune, I finish with a discussion on what it means to decolonize the settler mind.

## 6.1 “O Canada! Our home and native land!”

When I was in elementary school in the 1980s and 90s, we learned about heroic “settlers” and “pioneers” who bravely navigated the wild and unpopulated areas of “Canada’s” most untamed places. We visited recreations of pioneer villages, and we learned about how these trailblazers “discovered” maple syrup. We learned of our courageous “forefathers” like Sir John A. MacDonald who supposedly led us to “progress”. We learned about the pioneers cooperating with local “Aboriginal tribes,” and the celebration of thanksgiving as an example of this friendly relationship. Canada, we learned, was the land of polite peacekeepers. We learned not to question our teachers, and certainly not to question the legitimacy or authority of the state.

The history of “Canada” that I was taught in school is a sham. In order to justify the occupation of land that is now called “North America”, European invaders exterminated the existing Indigenous population. Those people who survived extermination were dehumanized so that the invaders could symbolically empty the land of people—creating Terra Nullius. In refusing to associate positive human qualities with Indigenous people, the invaders created a new sub-species of racialized beings called “Indians”.

### 6.1.1 Shifting from autonomy to dependence

In examining the annexation of Omushkegowuk and Innu lands, the history of industrial growth unfolds as the ongoing story of colonialism. The Victor Diamond mine and the Voisey’s Bay nickel mine are not the only stories of industrial growth in those areas. Rather, the Crown and then the federal and provincial governments, set out purposefully to extinguish the Indigenous people in order to expand industrial growth and feed the market economy. The people were then exterminated through strategic starvation and disease. This is the same strategy that Winston Churchill used to exterminate Indigenous people during the Bengal Famine of 1943-1944 (Krishnan Simha 2014). For those who survived, the federal government invented laws to assemble, quarantine, and then assimilate the people by training them for wage-labour jobs to feed the capitalist economy. In short, colonial capitalism needed cheap labour and raw material. These exploitable “savages” were made purposefully dependent on the state. In creating a

system of dependence, the government was able simultaneously to control the population, open up land for exploitation, and legitimate its existence as a sovereign nation with duties and responsibilities to its “citizens”.

### 6.1.2 The role of heteropatriarchy

Heteropatriarchy is the normalization of heterosexual masculine dominance (Smith 2008:72). Such performative dominance operates through the contradictory image of the father who is strong, violent, abusive, yet loving. When missionaries invaded Omushkegowuk and Innu territory, they installed heteropatriarchy through Christianity, or the belief in an omnipresent, dangerous, yet loving God who must be obeyed. Installing a fear of God in this scenario, is the precondition to the acceptance of domination by the Canadian state. As Judith Butler reminds us, “[t]he rules that define culture as supported by the heterosexual family are clearly also those that set the prerequisites for entering into citizenship” (2010:116). Once the people were convinced to organize around a scary but loving central male figure, the acceptance of the state as provider and abuser is made easier. In other words, the state’s paternal relationship with Indigenous people is reflective of the tyrannical father whose children still seek his love and approval after violent beatings.

In the Innu and the Omushkegowuk communities today, the existence of a “chief” and “band council” are colonially created institutions which are meant to reflect and reinforce European systems of dominance that are rooted in heteropatriarchy, creating divide and rule possibilities. Once the male “chief” and “council” were installed, favouritism and privilege were bestowed on these “leaders” so that they would emulate the colonial master. Through the creation of gendered hierarchy, male leaders learned to covet power and dominance, maintaining the colonial structure. Further, the selection of singular people to operate positions of control helped to instill values of individualism and greed which are needed to fuel the capitalist economy.

### 6.1.3 Suicide and the violence of colonialism

Once the Omushkegowuk and Innu people were coerced into Christian submission, formal training for wage-labour began. Like the church, schools became a central hub for

the colonial authority to instill predictability, rationalized authority, and shame for traditional identity. That the Innu and Inninew were humiliated by the colonial authorities in Church and at school is significant as it created entire peoples filled with indignity and feelings of inferiority. Franz Fanon (1959/1963) reminds us that the inferiority complex in colonized people is the desired outcome from the elite. When inferiority is implanted, the colonized person seeks to cleanse herself of these emotions. Cleansing comes in the form of violence at the personal and interpersonal level. Cleansing is also enacted through emulating the colonizer, becoming “civilized”. As Coulthard (2014) reminds us, this results in Indigenous people acting with “Red skin [and] White Masks”.

The colonized inferiority complex also presents itself through self-harm and interpersonal violence. Both Attawapiskat and the Innu Nation suffer from serious socio-psychological problems which are rooted in colonialism. Suicide is a regular tragedy in both communities. More than a century ago, Durkheim identified four types of suicide, two of which apply to the Omushkegowuk and the Innu. In these cases, ‘anomic’ and ‘fatalistic’ suicide are not mutually exclusive, both are motivating factors in people’s decision to end their own life.

Durkheim posited that when social institutions dissolve, suicide rates are likely to rise. When major social patterns change, people feel a sense of crisis and chaos because they do not understand their position within society and they do not know how to connect with others vis-à-vis common morals, beliefs, and values, people react through self-destruction; this is what Durkheim calls “anomic suicide”. (1897/2002).

Durkheim also describes another type of suicide that is presented in the Omushkegowuk and Innu communities; fatalistic suicide. Fatalistic suicide occurs when there is overregulation through oppressive forces. Within these institutional laws and regulations, people feel trapped and doomed by the thought of their own future. The impending sense of doom is all encompassing, and the only way out, as perceived by those who experience these feelings, is through suicide. (Ibid).



Even after more than one hundred years, Durkheim's observations on suicide are helpful in understanding the crises that have been imposed on the Omushkegowuk and the Innu. Both groups of people have been subject to complete social transformation. In the 1960s, the people were thrust into Eurocentric social and political organization. In one generation, the Innu and the Omushkegowuk were coercively transformed from autonomous nomadic hunters, to domesticated citizens in villages. Traditionally held values of egalitarianism and ecological responsibility continue to be challenged by capitalist values such as radical individualism and greed, based on Durkheim's theory, 'anomic' suicide presents here. However, at the same time in these communities, the people been rendered practically prisoners in the sedentarized villages where all sorts of rules and laws oppose on the people. Overregulation through oppressive forces such as the *Indian Act*, provincial and federal law, the health care system, child and family services, and the church leave people feeling hopeless, like there is no way out. Durkheim's 'fatalistic' suicide is relevant here.

That suicide is endemic among the Innu and the Inninew is a tragic outcome of cultural and cognitive imperialism which continues to be imposed by "Canada". In addition, the cultural shaming and forced assimilation, strips people of their dignity and self-worth and results in slow suicides through alcoholism, substance abuse, and violence. Ridding people of their autonomy has also created dangerous changes in diet. Highly processed foods have replaced wild foods, or as Samson notes, the people have moved from "[c]aribou to Chubby Chicken" (2013:127). The result of dietary colonialism is more slow suicides through diseases such as diabetes, cancer, obesity, amputation, and heart conditions.

Contemporary empirical studies support Durkheim's theory about anomic suicide. Chandler and Lalonde (1998; 2010) have undertaken two large epidemiological studies which seek to explain why suicide rates are higher in some settled Indigenous villages, and not others. Although Indigenous communities experience disproportionate material poverty, 'being poor' is not empirically associated with heightened suicide rates. Rather, suicide rates were lowest in communities that showed strong signs of cultural continuity (2010:238). Both the Omushkegowuk and the Innu have had success with reducing

social pathology through community-led initiatives which involve cultivating tradition. Harm reduction needs to focus on culturally-based, self-directed programs that feed traditional values, morals, and social organization.

Adhesion to traditional forms of social organization are a protective factor against suicide. However, dominant discourse in capitalist societies posit that material poverty is the biggest source of human suffering, and thus, economic stimulation is presented by the bourgeois as the logical solution. For example, the following excerpt is the Canadian government's response to a 2010 federal report on social development and poverty:

Underlying all of our investments is the principle that strong economic stewardship is essential to our success as a country as a whole, and in turn, to the success of families and individuals. This government is taking measures to ensure the economic and fiscal fundamentals are in place to support a strong economy and robust labour market. We have been active throughout the recent global recession to ensure that Canada continues to have a stable foundation for growth and prosperity [...] Labour market participation is key to economic prosperity (Report issued November 2010, last updated 2014)

It is through this logic that industrial growth is presented as a solution to the federally embarrassing problem of "Aboriginal poverty" which shows itself publically through images of racialized children huffing gas and contemplating suicide on national television. In this way, the tragedy of suicide is exploited for the capitalist agenda to feed the market economy.

Economic stimulation as a solution to human suffering on reserves is made all the more ludicrous when studying sociological theory. Durkheim's theory of anomic suicide suggests that the sudden infusion of money into people's lives can have the same crisis effect as the sudden loss. It is the change in social organization which causes distress, not material wealth; "So far is the increase in poverty from causing the increase in suicide that even fortunate crises, the effect of which is abruptly to enhance a country's prosperity, affect suicide like economic disasters" (1897/2002:203). Thus, large-scale industrial growth near Indigenous communities is likely to *increase* social disruption, self-harm, and suicide.

## 6.2 Government and corporate collusion: Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs)

Building industry as a means to increase Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is part of the colonial mission to create the autonomous and sovereign state called "Canada". Industrial growth on traditional Indigenous land is not new, rather, the entire country is built on stolen Indigenous land. Every house, road, factory, hydroelectric dam, and mine are physical proof of state-led squatting.

Indigenous people and populations have been resisting industrial growth since occupation began. These various forms of protest have slowed economic "progress", and have sometimes resulted in violence at the hands of the state; the murder of Dudley George during the standoff at Ipperwash is an example (see Linden 2007 for the Attorney General's full Ipperwash Inquiry).

In order for industrial growth to appear more appealing, Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs) are endorsed by the state as a means to quash potential protest. Beyond expressing a general sentiment of support in federal reports (see AANDC 2014:15 for an example), IBAs are now being incorporated into environmental impact assessments and land claim agreements. For instance, the Innu's Tshash Petapen Agreement-in-Principle has an entire chapter dedicated to non-renewable resources which dictates that the Innu may only share in "major developments" through the negotiation of IBAs (Samson 2014:261). However, IBAs emerge as the product of enormous power imbalances between the corporation and the community in question. Through corporate legalism, reduced time-lines, confidentiality and other means, corporations fabricate consent from communities. Once an IBA has been ratified, legal stipulations within the agreement generally prohibit changes. As an expression of corporate and government perception management, IBAs are used to preserve the illusion of compassionate capitalism. Disguised by the language of "negotiation", IBAs appear to be a positive step toward "sustainability" and "progress" as they are presented as if both parties possess equal power. It is through these means that academics and government officials describe the Victor, and Voisey's Bay mines as 'success stories' (such is the case in O'Faircheallaigh 2013:1797; Fidler and Hitch 2007:60; Gibson 2006).

Through the promotion of supposed social responsibility, governments and corporations seek to enlist trust and investment from settler society. Trust and investment, it is hoped, will be delivered in the form of votes and consumerism.

Normative evaluations of IBAs posit them as forms of social responsibility. However, a counter-narrative suggests that IBAs are used as a tool to shift dependence away from the state, and toward private enterprise. Elite groups and members of communities are shaped and molded in order to recreate the same systems of dominance which fuel the capitalist colonial empire. The colonized imitate the colonizer, falling prey to the seduction of power. Under this hegemonic system, the rhetoric of “self-government” and “self-determination” come to represent the reification of capitalism, as the colonized no longer need the colonizer to fuel the structure of dominance—they do so independently. As Fanon teaches:

The national bourgeoisie discovers its historical mission is intermediary. As we have seen, its vocation is not to transform the nation but prosaically serve as a conveyor belt for capitalism, forced to camouflage itself behind the mask of neocolonialism (1963/2004:100-101).

Systems of power and privilege make social injustice more difficult to recognize and understand. Settler allies who recognize the violence of colonialism, must also decolonize the mind which has been steeped in privilege.

### 6.3 The road to hell is paved with good intentions: decolonizing the settler mind

Alfred and Corntassel (2005) remind us that unity is needed in order to combat the all-consuming force of colonial imperialism (603). However, Canada is built on imbalanced relationships and broken trust between invader/settler society and Indigenous peoples. Systems of privilege continue to make unifying a difficult task. Decolonization involves building solidarity through long-term and meaningful relationships based on mutual respect and trust, or what Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox calls “co-existence through co-resistance” (2012). Evaluating oppression also means evaluating privilege. This means that settler groups need to evaluate their position of privilege within the colonial system.

Decolonizing the settler mind involves facilitating discussion about topics which are difficult to address. Decolonization involves identifying entitlement, including the privilege and desire to occupy someone else's land. The process of deconstructing colonial ideology is not easy. Even identifying who is considered a "settler" is difficult. What of people, like me, who possess some Indigenous ancestry? When we begin to converse about how much "Indian" blood runs through our veins, we enter into colonial territory which has used blood quantum to categorize and demonize people under the colonial regime—we engage in racism. At the same time, I must ask myself (as others should too), whether my adherence to—and pride about—possessing Mi'kmaq ancestry is rooted in a desire to appropriate a cultural identity which I have not grown up with. Further, it must be contemplated whether my attachment to my Mi'kmaq ancestors is used to validate the illegitimate occupation of land; I live in traditional Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe territory.

I am inspired by Scott Morgensen's (2012) approach to decolonization. Morgensen asks that settlers consider the implications of our own desires to join in the decolonization struggle as a means to legitimate the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands and the appropriation of Indigenous cultures:

Settler radicals desperately need to investigate this truth. It is relevant in particular to those for whom anarchism links them to communalism and counterculturism, such as in rural communes, permaculture, squatting, hoboing, foraging, and neo-pagan, earth-based, and New Age spirituality. These "alternative" settler cultures formed by occupying and traversing stolen Indigenous land and often by practicing cultural and spiritual appropriation. Their participants have imagined that they act anti-colonially by "appreciating" Indigenous culture or pursuing what they imagine to be Indigenous ways of life. But using these methods to try to be intimate with Indigenous land and culture expresses settler desires without necessarily contradicting them. Critiquing and separating from these practices may be necessary for settlers to commit to work for Indigenous decolonization (2011).

Settlers must also begin to question the motivations which drive us to express "solidarity" with Indigenous movements. This means reflecting on whether we are aligning with Indigenous actions in order to further our own personal, professional, social, or political agendas. Walia (2012) warns settlers not to appropriate and then compartmentalize

Indigenous struggles to fit neatly into “the machinery of existing leftist narratives”. Realizing that all systems of oppression intersect is key in unification, however, it must also be recognized that oppression is not experienced the same way by all groups. As such, various systems of oppression need to be “approached as incommensurable but not incompatible” (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel 2014:3). Settlers must realize that aligning with Indigenous struggles to further their own gains is not only an extension of cultural appropriation, but it is also an appendage to the colonial mentality of “saving” the “Savage”.

Reserves were largely created to make the Indigenous population invisible. When racialized people are invisible, those who are in dominant positions are free to express the same prejudiced attitudes which perpetuate injustice. Racist statements are said aloud behind closed doors every day. And in turn, interpersonal discrimination and racism unfolds on the streets at the hands of settlers who have come to believe that racism against Indigenous people is socially acceptable. The Indigenous have been successfully Othered.

Beyond the indignity of facing daily prejudice, racialized people face discrimination within public institutions, as exemplified by the disproportionate presence of Indigenous bodies in the justice system (see Iacobucci 2013). Another example is the racism which proliferates in health care delivery institutions. The death of Robert Sinclair, a double amputee who died in a Winnipeg hospital after waiting 34 hours in the emergency room for a treatable bladder infection is a case in point (Puxley 2014). Racism exists as an outcome of colonial capitalism. The Indigenous were successfully Othered so as to justify their extermination. For those who survived, violent assimilationist policies and laws were imposed, which in turn causes more violence at the personal and interpersonal level. This system exists so that the elite may continue to rule and oppress. Settlers must learn to address racism and discrimination head-on, not only within the academe and from the comfort of our desks, but also in our personal lives and conversations.

## 6.4 Way forward: suggestions for further research

Moving forward in the struggle for social justice and decolonization in the land that is now called “Canada” means interrupting the colonial imperialist narrative. Interruption comes through creating alternative accounts of history which challenge the colonizer’s version of events and assumption of authority. “Canada” operates as a sovereign nation based on the false premise that the land was empty of occupation and governance when the colonizers arrived. More attention needs to be paid to the “colonial magic” which justifies the Canadian state’s “right” to control Indigenous peoples under the liberal discourse of “citizenship” (Samson 1999).

As part of interrupting “colonial magic”, decolonizing intervention is needed in the critical evaluation of self-government rhetoric. More attention needs to be paid to the implications of self-government policies which are entrenched in the delivery of “land claims” settlements. For example, scholars may take inspiration from Samson (2014) who critically explores the Tshash Petapen Innu Land Claims Agreement-in-Principle. Samson interrupts the imperialist narrative which posits that land claims represent “progress” through “recognition”. Rather, Samson argues, land claims simply affirm the Indigenous group’s recognition and legitimation of the state, confirming their own citizenship within its constructed boundaries (247). More work to deconstruct the land claims and self-government process is needed.

Further work in decolonization also involves identifying how systems of oppression intersect. For example, within Indigenous communities, how does power operate to privilege some and not others? What are the implications of decolonization for Indigenous people who do not want it?

Finally, more attention needs to be paid to decolonizing the settler mind. Settler institutions exist through colonized assumptions. The medicalization of social pathology is a great example of reified settler assumptions. When colonial trauma is medicalized, the root cause of the problem is concealed while Indigenous people are blamed for their own suffering. More attention needs to be paid to community-led, culturally based

projects which aim to promote healing colonial trauma, and dismantling settler capitalism from within.

## Chapter 7

### 7 Conclusion

The present study sought to explore the social costs of industrial growth in the sub-Arctic regions of the place that is now called “Canada”. The study has identified that the social costs of industrial growth are part of an ongoing process of colonialism which continues to annex Indigenous lands so as to feed the capitalist economy and reify the power of the state. The present thesis exposes the social costs of industrial growth through a comparative analysis of the Attawapiskat First Nation and the Innu Nation. These colonially created communities were chosen because they share similar relationships with the colonial state. Namely, both groups were forcefully sedentarized during the 1960s; both groups experience high levels of social pathology as a result of colonial trauma; both groups exemplify high levels of dependence on government relief; and both groups have signed Impact Benefit Agreements with transnational corporations for large-scale resource extraction on traditional lands.

The main findings of the study were summarized through individual chapters which are meant to highlight different facets of ongoing colonialism. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and summary of the study. The second chapter highlights the process of social control embedded within colonialism through the delicate balance between force and ideology. The third chapter focuses on the collusion between government forces and private enterprise which drives the market economy and perpetuates neo-colonialism. Next, chapter four discusses the Omushkegowuk of Attawapiskat and their relationship with the De Beers Victor mine. The following chapter presents the Innu Nation and their relationship with the Voisey’s Bay nickel mine. Finally, chapter six provides a discussion which highlights the violence of settler-capitalism as embedded in the ongoing theft of Indigenous lands through neo-colonialism. Chapter six ends with a discussion about decolonization.



The theoretical implications of this study are important. Social theory reveals that the violence of colonialism continues to create serious psycho-social problems at the personal and community levels. Suicide, sexual abuse, gas-sniffing, alcoholism, drug-use, family violence, and other forms of abuse can be explained through the work of Marx (1844/78;1883/78), Durkheim (1897/2002), Fanon (1952/2008; 1963/2004), and Chandler and Lalonde (1998; 2010). Social pathology is a result of the dissolution of traditional social organization, identity shaming, and the severing of cultural continuity. Community-led projects which utilize traditional cultural-based healing practices are the only solutions which have shown promise amongst the Omushkegowuk and the Innu in their quest for social health. All of these practices involve self-esteem building through nurturing the interconnected relationships that humans have within ecology, and fostering personal and collective responsibility for protecting the land. It is therefore antithetical to promote the further dispossession of land through resource extraction as a means to improve the lives and health of these groups. If healing comes through building on traditional identity as rooted in the land, then destroying the land is another form of self-harm, and the cycle repeats itself.

The research presented in this thesis reveals that the financial rewards of industrial growth are few, while the cultural, human, and ecological costs are many. Those financial rewards that do exist are dangerous. Social theory predicts that the sudden influx of material wealth, if there is any, will likely deepen the wounds of colonialism, and increase self-destructive behaviour. Resources are not distributed evenly, and royalties merely go on to fuel the capitalist economy. Not only does industrial growth continue to sever these communities from their traditional lands, but it also threatens to deepen colonially imposed social and psychological wounds.

Decolonization presents opportunities to imagine new paths for social justice. Future research should focus on the implications and process of decolonization, and this includes decolonizing the settler mind. But, the mind of the colonized also needs to be decolonized. Learning to identify the social control mechanisms which are used to further entrench colonial imperialism and dependence on the market economy is a good place to start in this journey.

A major limitation of the present study is that it only focuses on colonially created “communities” or “reserves”. The study, therefore, does not illuminate the complications or challenges of being an Indigenous person in urban settings. Further, the rural locations of Attawapiskat, Sheshatshiu, and Natuashish may present very different challenges than “communities” which have been created near more urbanized settings, and thus, these challenges are not addressed.

The violence of colonialism in the land that is now called “Canada” is dangerous and ongoing. As an extension of colonial imperialism, large-scale industrial growth risks severing people from their traditional identities—further entrenching capitalist assimilation. Not only does this violence represent cultural genocide locally, but it has serious implications internationally through the viciousness of climate change. It is my sincere hope that the implications of the present study add to the growing body of work which seeks to locate social justice as an attainable goal.

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## Appendix A

### Letter from Norbert Witt, PhD in response to sharing my research on Attawapiskat

*Norbert Witt and his wife Jacqueline (Jackie) Hookimaw-Witt live in Attawapiskat and have conducted research there. I drew largely from their collective research in composing my chapter on the Omushkegowuk of Attawapiskat*

Attawapiskat, March 22, 2015

Dear Caylee,

Jackie and I read your chapter with interest and we discussed it. Jackie asked me to respond in detail as she is busy right now with her project with our theatre children.

Altogether I want to thank you for sharing your work with us. It is very exhilarating to read about our research and how you interpreted it in the way we intended it to be interpreted. In all the articles about treaty #9 the emphasis is usually on legal interpretations, legal meaning the law of non-Native people. You beautifully picked out the parts where it shows the Mushkegowuk traditional perspective not only in the quotes on our research but also from other historical sources (some of them also used by us in our work). Your analysis hits the nail when you summarize the purpose of the treaty as creating “legal space” in order to extinguish the rights of Aboriginal people, while the Natives just wanted to save their land before, what then unfortunately happened, it was taken by ‘civilization’. The point is that there are very few people who actually try to show the perspective of Jackie’s forefathers (and mothers, as Jackie would certainly add) and we want to commend you on taking on this task, which might not be too popular within main stream academia. I particularly want to point out your discussion of the holistic view with ‘pimaatosiwin’ which you perfectly explain with the two quotes on David Tookate and Patrick Metat. Both elders are gone meanwhile and with your discussion in this chapter you contribute to showing their own worldview, interpreting it to those who still have to understand it. What is particularly beautiful in your interpretation is that you included spirituality and responsibility (Patrick) into explaining why land could not be surrendered. You totally understand what Jackie wanted to say with these quotes.

To your paragraph *Colonial Trauma* there is an actual example (a story) concerning the being cut off from support when you did not send your children to Residential School. Jackie’s uncle Toby was hiding his children in the bush when the agents came to pick them up for Ste. Anne Residential School in Fort Albany, and he did not change his mind even when all social welfare support was cut off.

What you also presented very well is the fact that discussions on treaty are based on a false understanding of the original political structure of the people, who did not organize in bands but

had rather lived in family groups on the land. If this fact is not considered, the analysis that land was stolen from the Natives in the treaties cannot be understood and any suggestion of this robbery is therefore easily dismissed. You put that very nicely into the foreground.

There was another winter road block in 2013 where Jackie and I were involved by looking into the legalities for the blockaders. We have not published anything on that officially, but we put a defence strategy together for those who had to appear in court and Jackie went with them 'representing' the group (which meant that she had to identify herself as a blockader). I have written something about these incidents in a sort of biography which will be used for a possible TV show in Bavaria (Germany).

I will share that with you in one of my next e-mails. It is, of course, very personal (including the lyrics of my own songs) but it describes what was going on in my life (and our research) since I came to Canada.

With your chapter you brought our research back into an academic discussion and for that we want to thank you specifically. Could you please inform us whenever your work is published and how we can have access to it. We are very interested in this kind of academic work, and we will be able to tie our latest research (the art projects we are presently working on) neatly into our past academic work. And, we would like to quote on your work as well, of course.

So, thank you for sharing and we wish you all the best for the future

Norbert

## Curriculum Vitae

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<b>Post-secondary Education and Degrees:</b>	King's College at the University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2002-2009 B.A.
<b>Honours and Awards:</b>	Dean's Honour List 2010, 2009  King's University College Alumni Association Award 2009
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